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JULY '10
ISSUE 186 • £3.95

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6th - 8th August 2010 www.tattoojam.co.uk

TATTOO JAM 2010

WE HIGHLIGHT SOME OF THE GIFTED
ARTISTS WORKING TATTOO JAM 2010

ARTIST PROFILES

Mick Squires

KORPUS TATTOOS

Xed Lehead & Mad Alan

DIVINE CANVAS

Jeff Ortega

EVIL FROM THE NEEDLE

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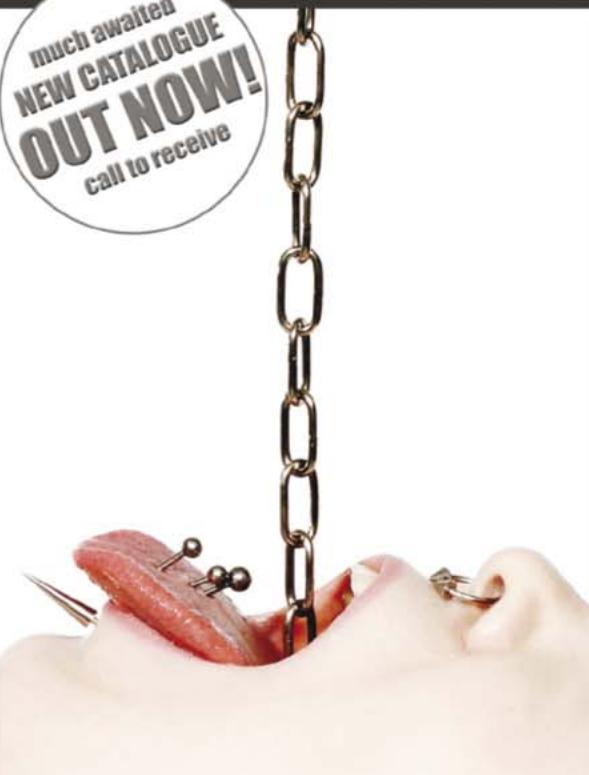
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Recently, whilst trying to purchase goods of some considerable value with cash, the vendor seemed genuinely surprised that I got a bundle of notes out of my pocket. 'You can pay by credit card if you like?' was his response. This got me thinking that cash is very nearly a thing of the past. These days you can get a 'One touch' card for payments of under ten pounds, but I enjoy paying for good with cash and I don't know about you but I will be sad to see the possible demise of our coinage. I must confess though, I use my debit card for nearly everything – except tattoos.

Tattooing is one of the last bastions of cash payments. Recently I was stood in the witness box in a crown court to give a character witness statement for a good friend of mine, who happens to be a tattooist. My job was to explain to the legal profession that tattooing is an age-old profession that deserves a modicum of respect and also that tattooing is mainly a cash-based industry.

There was a certain amount of satisfaction to be had watching the shock register on the judge's faces as I ran through some facts about hourly rates, waiting lists and the number of people that wear tattoos these days. This was topped off as copies of Skin Deep that were passed around the courtroom and even the judge admitted that he was impressed with the quality of work showcased in the

magazines and mentioned that there was a huge diversity of styles and designs.

You could almost hear the defence and prosecuting lawyers' jaws flop open when I gave them sales figures of just how many magazines Skin Deep sells each month. I could almost hear the words of; "how can these unsightly people with their weird interests generate such a following?" going through their heads. Almost instantly, I could feel them looking at myself and the other witnesses, that were also tattooed, with something akin to (all be it a little) respect.

To be honest, I felt quite proud that I had the opportunity to make a certain part of society sit up and think and hopefully look at tattoos and tattooed folk in a slightly better light. Considering that lawyers must see many, many 'seedy' types pass by them everyday, many sporting tattoos; so to slightly remove, or at least smudge the edges of the stigma, was quite a good feeling.

The whole incident made me think long and hard. Part of the "evidence" that the individual was guilty was because said individual had a lot of cash in his studio safe. Yep, cash...

The powers that be (the local constabulary) took it upon themselves that because this person had cash in the safe that is backed up the allegation of crime, so the cash was seized under the Proceeds Of Crime Act 2002 (POCA).



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Now the individual involved was not found guilty of a crime that would give them an income, but the cash, as I am writing this, is still being held by the powers that be as they seem reluctant to give the person their money back that they had earned – quite legitimately – by working their arse off tattooing non-stop for a years and saving for a forthcoming tax bill.

So I ask myself is it now a crime to have cash? There are still many folk that do not trust the banking system (and judging by recent events, I don't blame anyone for having doubts with the banks) so what do those in the cash industry that tattooing is do? Do tattooists go back to the barter system and charge say, a small goat for a colour sleeve or a bag of turnips for a back piece? It might work...

At about the same time I heard that cash payments had fallen by 14 percent in the decade ending in 2009. Predictions are that cash payments are set to drop even further.

All these recent events bring to mind a great quote from the great Cash Cooper – an old time UK tattooist – "In God we Trust – All the rest pay Cash!"

Enjoy!

NEIL



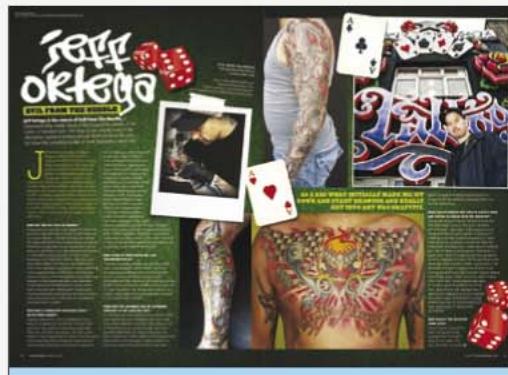
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FREE SUPPLEMENT

- TATTOO JAM - TATTOO TITANS**
Just a small taster of the incredible artists due to work Tattoo Jam in Doncaster.



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FALLOUT

Seen an interesting clipping in the press? Got something that you'd like reviewed or featured? Got some spare chocolate or beer? Send them to: Skin Deep, The Old School, Higher Kinnerton, Chester CH4 9AJ OR EMAIL: editor@skindeep.co.uk

ETERNAL ART SEEK PRIZE MAN (OR WOMAN)

Steve Prizeman's Eternal Art in Chelmsford are looking for established artists to join forces and scope the spectrum of all tattoo genres.

If you think that this could be the opportunity for you and you have a healthy client base, send your portfolio to PriZeMaN to be considered for a position...and Steve asks that you don't apply if you're a mediocre tattooist. Send your CVs to eternal-art@hotmail.co.uk for the opportunity to graft alongside a great British tattoo artist in a fabulous studio.



GUEST ARTISTS AT THOU ART, SHEFFIELD

The Californian king of colour work, Cecil Porter will be working at Thou Art in Sheffield from the 14th July to the 14th August. Cecil will also be working at Tattoo Jam again this year so for any bookings at Thou Art, please get in touch with the guys on 01142 700985 www.myspace.com/thouartsheffield If you would like a tattoo done at Tattoo Jam contact Cecil directly at:

www.cecilportertattoos.com.

As well as Cecil, Thou Art will be playing host to another superb artist, George Bardadim from Russia. Again, George will be working Tattoo Jam also.

www.bardadim.com



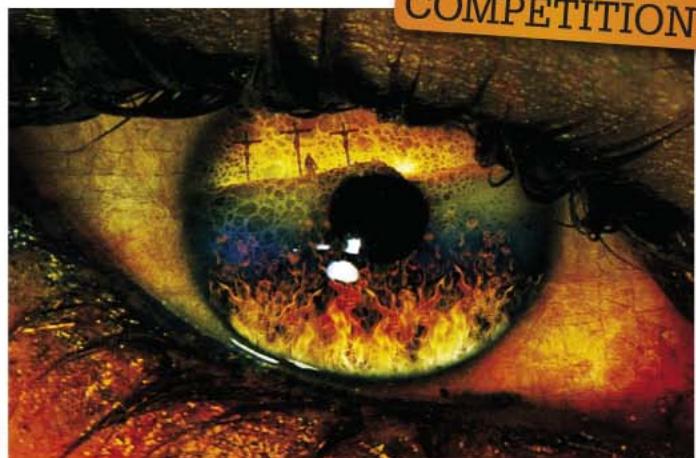
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LITERALLY!)

Heaven & Hell Tattoos & Piercing has moved premises, but not too far, they are right next door to where they used to be, but the difference is that they are now on 3 floors doing custom work and flash by appointments and walk ins. It's the same friendly service and relaxed atmosphere just a larger team. Open 7 days a week, pop in and say Hi at 193 High Street, Falkirk, FK1 1DU tel 01324 617617 www.bebo.com/heavennhelltattoos.

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COMPETITION

WIN AN AVELINA DE MORAY CANVAS!

For those of you that enjoyed last month's interview with Artist Avelina De Moray and her gothic vampire artistry, you can now have the chance of winning one of her wonderful canvases to grace your very own wall.

To enter, simply visit the page below, and enter your details: www.avelinademoray.com/skindeep.html

The winner will be announced on the 1st July



TATTOOS FOR TIBET

On 7th October 2010, tattoo artists from across the World will join the Tattoos for Tibet project and donate their wages from at least one tattoo to Students For A Free Tibet to commemorate the Tibetan people's nonviolent resistance to Chinese occupation.

The Tattoos For Tibet project aims to bring more awareness and understanding of the Chinese rule in Tibet to the public and gives tattooists worldwide the opportunity to use their talent and skill to raise money and aid the cause in the best way possible. The artists participating have agreed to donate their wages from at least one tattoo on the designated date, including the hopeful completion of some Tibetan inspired tattoos in the process. They have also been asked to provide one piece of Tibetan art-inspired flash, which

will all later be compiled and sold to raise even more money for Students For A Free Tibet. Current participating artists include Gentleman Jim Aitken, Oddboy, Gary Valentine, Danny Rossiter, Martin Robson, Sakura Avalon, Beany, Carl Cooke, and Adrian Pain, with many more to be announced as word of the project spreads around the world. The group are still accepting more artists to join the Tattoos for Tibet project, so if you'd like to get involved, please contact them at www.myspace.com/tattoosfortibet.

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Are you any closer to winning £3,000 for your HORNITOS bottle design?

Time for an update on our exclusive competition with authentic Mexican tequila brand HORNITOS. We've received lots of impressive entries and, whilst the competition has now closed, the voting for the readers' favourite is well and truly open!

Some of you have already voted for your favourite design on the drINK HORNITOS competition home page www.bigtattooplant.com/hornitos but if you haven't had a chance to check out all the fantastic designs then make sure you do soon! Voting closes on Thursday 10 June.

In the meantime, here's a flavour of just a few of the entries that have caught the attention of Skin Deep readers (and judges!) so far...

The site features entries from artists who specialise in all manner of media so it's well worth a look, especially as your vote may help the judges determine a final victor. What's more, all votes will be automatically entered into a prize draw to win tickets to Tattoo Jam!

THE PRIZE

The winning artist will bag a feature interview in the August issue of Skin Deep and the autumn edition of Tattoo Master to showcase their talents, and will also receive a whopping £3,000 cash prize to splurge as they see fit.

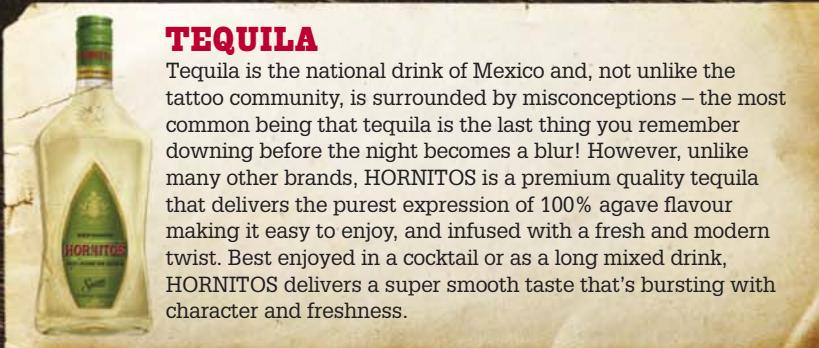
The winning design will be produced as a limited edition bottle destined for some of the swankiest tequila bars in the UK. In addition, the design will take a leading role in the showcase of works from the industry's leading tattoo artists as part of the HORNITOS exhibition at Tattoo Jam's ARTIST FriDAY. www.tattoojam.co.uk

To learn more and view and vote for the current entries - visit the website today at www.bigtattooplant.com/hornitos

*Please note the designs featured were top of the leader board at the time of this advertorial going to print but may not necessarily be the winning design

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THE JUDGES' FAVES SO FAR...

Neil Dalleywater
- Editor of Skin Deep

I really like the Emiliano Zapata inspired bottle as it conjours up the spirit of Hornitos tequila. Viva La Revolution!



Louis Molloy
- Celebrity Tattoo Artist
Lewis's design is my choice because it combines old and new Mexicana

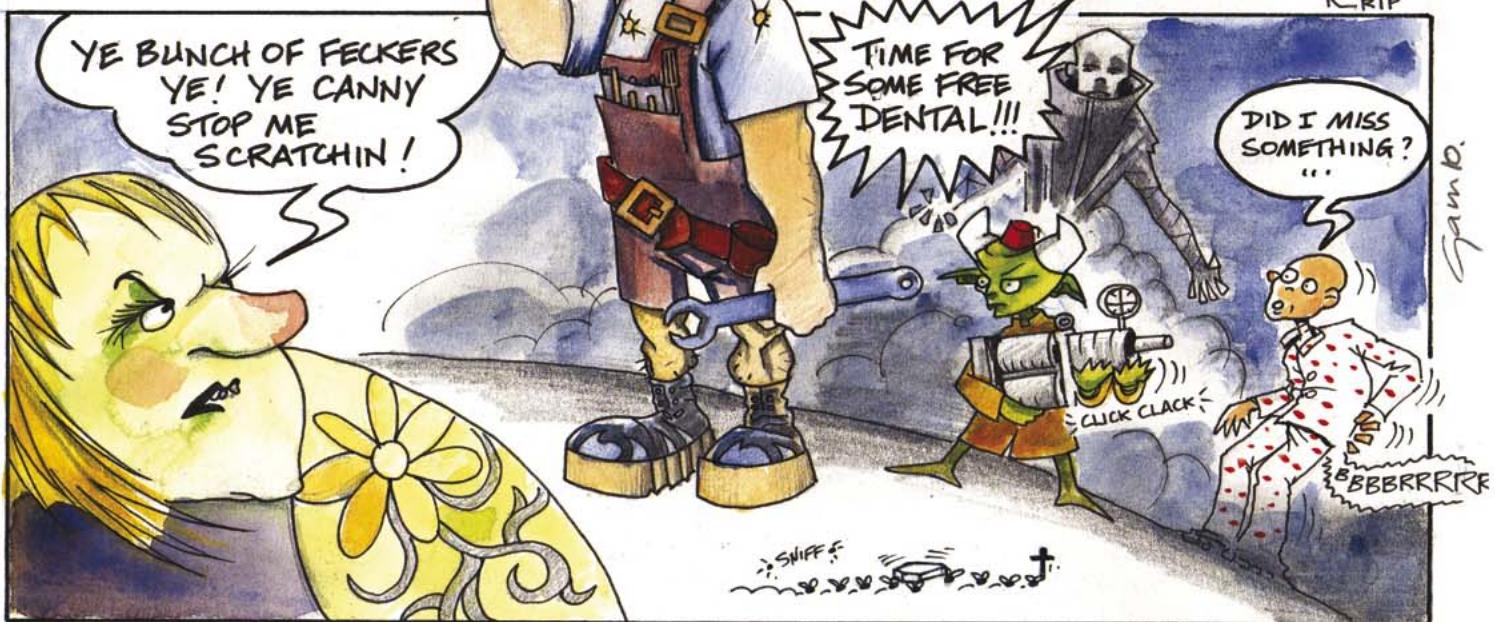
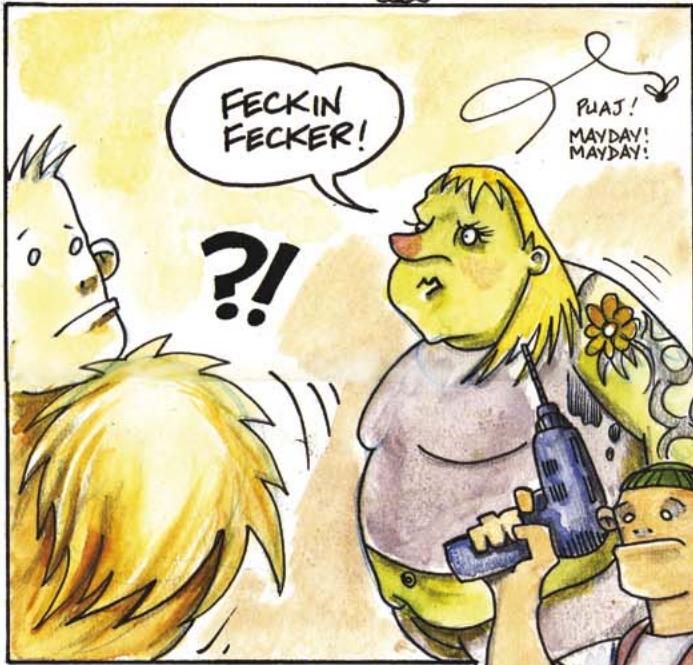
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ESSEX

On a brilliantly sunny Sunday morning on the 28th March, 2010, I ventured forth from central London, my comfort zone, to attend the first ever Essex Tattoo Expo.



JO BY SAM BOWER © SILVER NEEDLES, SOUTHEND

Despite having to negotiate the rigours of replacement bus services and the other inevitable delays one has come to expect if travelling by train at weekends, when services seem reduced to those on par with transport provisions in third world countries, I eventually arrived in the sleepy village of Margaretting where the convention took place.

This memorable event was organised by Marc, Steve and Chris from Skin Sorcerer Tattoo Studio in Maldon. This shop has been operating for over ten years and as such, is one of the longest established studios in Essex. Marc and the rest of the team regularly travel throughout the UK to attend and work at conventions, and they drew on this experience when deciding to stage a convention of their own.

Almost as soon as I exited the cab in which I had travelled from the station, I was greeted by Marc's wife, the lovely Tanya Bratz, (tanyabratz.com), who along with three other corseted beauties, welcomed me into the venue and served me with tea and



snacks before escorting me on a tour of the two separate buildings, the Ivy Hill Hotel and Furze Banqueting Suite, all set amongst beautiful, landscaped extensive grounds, which were encompassed by the event.

As the sun continued to shine, the crowds continued to arrive, with numbers exceeding all expectations, ultimately doubling those expected. As I explored, I began to realise that the atmosphere here was unlike that of most conventions in that it was more informal, friendly and relaxed. Having spoken previously to the organisers during the planning stages, I knew that their remit was to make all of the visitors feel as if they had been really



BEST OF SHOW TATTOO BY LEIGH OLDORN @ COSMIC TATTOO, COLCHESTER



JAMIE BY STEVE @ SHAMANICS TATTOO



LEE BY MARTIN © FLAMING GUN, COLCHESTER

As I explored, I began to realise that the atmosphere here was unlike that of most conventions in that it was more informal, friendly and relaxed.



PATRICK BY JOHN @ NARCISSISM TATTOO



ANNA BY ARAN BURTON @ COSMIC TATTOO, COLCHESTER

welcomed and looked after throughout the day, and I would say, that, from my perspective, this was definitely achieved. This attention to detail far surpassed that which I have experienced at the majority of other conventions I have attended over the years and definitely made a difference in terms of my enjoyment of the event.

In exploring the tattooing areas which were consistently busy throughout the day, I became aware that this expo had attracted several award winning tattooists as well as being a brilliant showcase for the work of up and coming artists, especially those locally based. As such I thought it would be



Probably my favourite piece of the day was a wonderful and incredibly vibrant Mad Hatter leg piece inked by Julie Clarke, another local artist.

interesting to document some of the work taking shape as the day progressed. One such tattoo was an impressive piece by Arran Burton on the lower leg of local body piercer, Dickie Smith, who underwent a marathon six-hour session. Dickie will hopefully feature in a Skin Deep profile later in the year.

Probably my favourite piece of the day was a wonderful and incredibly vibrant Mad Hatter leg piece inked by Julie Clarke, another local artist. Julie is the proprietor of Flaming Gun Tattoo Studio and has been tattooing for about twelve years, during which time she has amassed a rapidly increasing and loyal client base. The recipient of this particular tattoo was the suitably attired, Verity, who explained to me that she had been obsessed by Alice In Wonderland since she was a little girl. She went on to state that this piece had originally been intended for her arm, but on a smaller scale. However, when Verity and Julie went to see the recently released film starring Johnny Depp as the Mad Hatter, they both decided that the design would work better as a larger scale leg piece.

After a break for lunch in the venu's restaurant, I decided to explore the grounds with Tanya and the girls. I couldn't resist



MICHAEL BY FRANK MOORE @ SHAMANICS



DEAN BY XAVIER @ EDS HEAD



VERITY BY JULIE CLARKE © FLAMING GUN, COLCHESTER



DALE BY LEAH MOULE © SPEAR STUDIO, BIRMINGHAM



DANIELLE BY JEREMIAH BARBA © OUTER LIMITS CALIFORNIA



DARROL BY KAMIL MOSET, LONDON

As with all good things, the hours flew by and it was time for the winners to be announced as the judging was completed.

trying the delicious the spit roast barbecue, which was set up near to the lake, offering an ideal picnic area for those taking a break from the main show. Also in the grounds was a brilliant and colourful display of spray can art by the incredibly talented, braveone.co.uk, which, aside from having its own artistic merits, provided another impressive backdrop for photographs.

As with all good things, the hours flew by and it was time for the winners to be announced as the judging was completed. After all of the worthy recipients claimed their awards, the pace slowed down and the crowds thinned out until only the most stalwart revellers were left, most of whom retired to the bar for a last drink before hitting the road. Nowadays there are countless tattoo conventions scattered around the country with numbers still rising, some good some bad, but few offering an experience as different as was achieved at the first ever Essex Tattoo Expo. The organisers and their helpers are to be applauded in the creation of a tattoo convention, which stood out from the majority of others I have attended. Much of this success was due to extensive research, good planning, effective promotion and impressive interpersonal skills. Having spoken to Marc and Tanya subsequent to the event, I am certain that their wildest expectations were achieved in terms of attendance and the positive feedback, which I am aware, was received.

For more info, check out the various online galleries and blogs and make sure to attend next years event, I know I will. ☆



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NO REGRETS

INTERVIEW: NEIL DALLEYWATER PHOTOGRAPHY: TOMMI & ELA

TOMMI

Polish tattooist Tommi from No Regrets in Cheltenham seems to have come from nowhere and just exploded onto the British tattoo scene in the past year, scooping many awards; including two hat tricks of trophies in the last six months alone.

Tommi's unquenchable thirst for tattooing knowledge continues but not to be selfish, he is more than ready to impart some of his knowledge to his No Regrets cohorts, helping them with their tattooing careers where he can.

Tommi seems most at home with bright and vibrant full-colour tattoos but is equally adept at black and grey tattoos too. In fact he is a very competent all-round artist who with 11 trophies to his name so far, I'm sure we have not seen the last of by a long chalk. Not bad for a guy how used to build tattoo machines from toy parts! Tommi gave us a small insight to his tattooing career so far...

When I was a child I was always distracted from my schoolwork. I was the kid who was constantly day dreaming and looking out of the window. My mind was elsewhere all the time. I was only ever thinking about drawing and creating things from clay. I could never pay attention to the books that were in front of me, so from the age of 10, I found myself drawing with a biro on my friend's skin, creating dinosaurs and eagles amongst other animals and monsters. My first experience with tattooing was when I noticed people creating tattoos by hand, as professional tattoo machines weren't readily available in Poland at the time.

As a young teenager, I started creating tattoos on my own skin, building my machines out of old toys, which allowed me to create a machine that was very similar to a rotary machine. The tattoo culture in Poland at the time wasn't very popular at all and we were looked down upon constantly. I never had

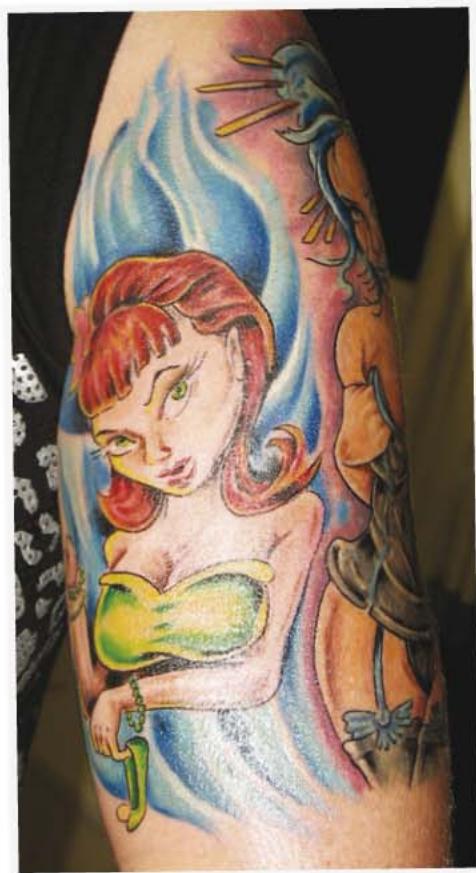
a proper apprenticeship, which meant the only way I could learn was through my own mistakes and discussing everything with other people who were also doing the same and were happy to discuss these issues. I grew up in a small, traditional Polish town, which was very isolated; therefore getting any tattoo-related information was next to impossible.

The tattoo industry in Poland is very limited in comparison to England, so when I decided I wanted to take my tattooing to the highest level I could, I decided it was time to move to somewhere new, so I came to the UK. It was always my dream to become a tattooist and have my work seen by as many people as I



could, but I was always being told to forget about it and do something more sensible. Not a chance! In England there is a high demand for tattoos everywhere so if you are good, you will always have work, so I had to come here to further my tattoo career. There is a great atmosphere in Poland amongst the tattooists,





IT WAS ALWAYS MY DREAM TO BECOME A TATTOOIST AND HAVE MY WORK SEEN BY AS MANY PEOPLE AS I COULD, BUT I WAS ALWAYS BEING TOLD TO FORGET ABOUT IT AND DO SOMETHING MORE SENSIBLE.

although they are very competitive, they are also very friendly with each other and I think this has helped to keep pushing the boundaries and has led to some of them becoming really well known tattooists in the world.

I arrived in England in 2006 in Colchester (Tattooinc), where I worked for the next three years and was quickly introduced to the British sense of humour. The guys in the shop soon took advantage of my small knowledge of English and I found myself at the local shop asking for an air guitar and when they sent me for lunch at the pasty shop and I asked for a pixie, I realised that I had better start learning English pretty quickly or there would be lots more embarrassing (and funny) situations!

My time in Colchester was a big step for me, I had chance to start work with equipment that I had never seen before; I didn't realise how important it was to try out other machines and styles and during this time I had the chance to meet other artists that I had only ever seen in tattoo magazines before. It was like one of my dreams had come true. I am extremely grateful that I got the opportunity to work there. I got the chance to get many different perspectives ☺

on tattooing when working with other artists from many different nationalities and the knowledge we all exchanged was of great benefit all of us.

Although I enjoyed my work, I found that I was doing a lot of flash designs and not getting to do the custom work that some of my friends had started to do back home and I began to get itchy feet and, to be honest, a little jealous.

At this time I felt that I wanted to go back to Poland and see if things had changed since I'd left. I was almost ready to leave. I gave 6 months notice about my decision and I was prepared to go home, but at the last minute, I was contacted by No Regrets in Cheltenham and offered a job in their studio. They really liked my work and I decided to meet them. When I visited the studio, I met the owner Ben, who told me that he wanted to build a unique shop that people, would recognise for producing some of the best work around and wanted me to help.

The situation at No Regrets works well for everyone because the art comes first and I am able to have full freedom with my work with time off to go to conventions. We have a



MY TIME IN COLCHESTER WAS A BIG STEP FOR ME, I HAD CHANCE TO START WORK WITH EQUIPMENT THAT I HAD NEVER SEEN BEFORE; I DIDN'T REALISE HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO TRY OUT OTHER MACHINES AND STYLES.



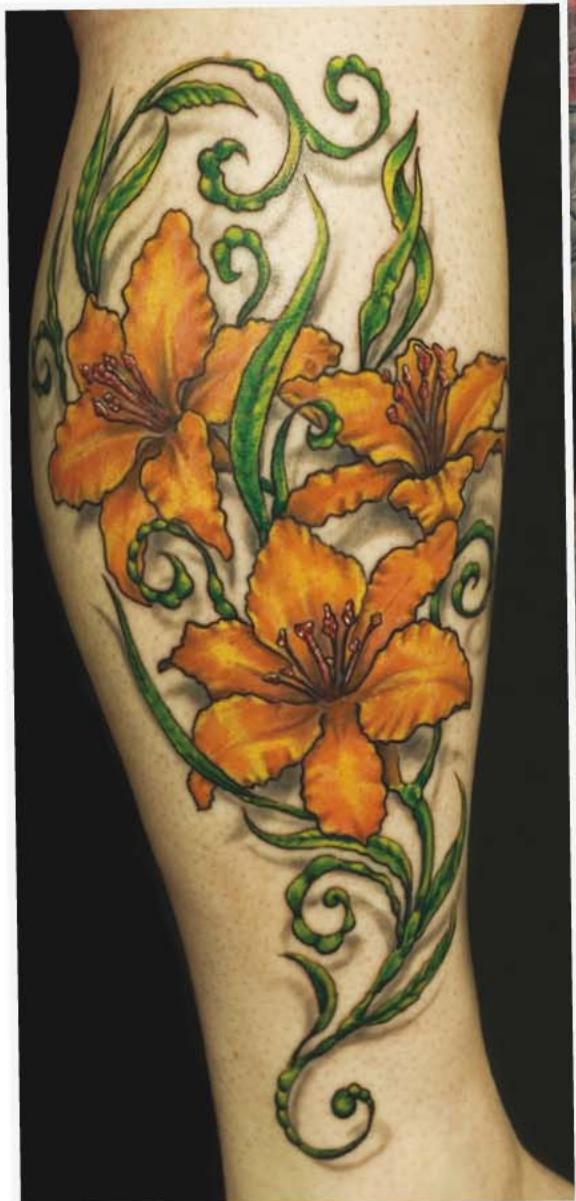
young team at the shop and I love that I am constantly getting fresh ideas from them. I work along side Meehow, who is producing some of the best black and grey portraits I have seen, so I leave those to him. I find it amazing that someone who has only just got into portraits can produce such outstanding quality with his work. Marcus is the newest member and has a very unique style. He has a background in animation and it is amazing to see how he can transform this into his tattoo

**WHATEVER HAPPENS
AND WHEREVER I GO
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DETAIL RATHER
THAN A FEW SMALL
TATTOOS WITH LESS.**

work, he is moving forward very quickly. Lastly we have an apprentice, Jen whose drawing and painting portrait work is excellent. She has done just a few tattoos on friends but shows a lot of promise. I love to help out the guys as they are learning and I am just showing them techniques and encouraging them to stick with their styles. We are still a new team but we are very motivated and get along very well. We recently opened a photography studio in the shop where Elanie is helping us to

commemorate our work; It also enables us to create completely new tattoo designs where we can play with light and shadows like we never had a chance before.

I think that I have a very different style to many other artists. I am a big fan of all of the styles of tattoos but I like to give them my own twist. I am largely influenced by fantasy artwork and this can often be seen in some of my work. When I meet a customer, it is very important to sit down with them and find out ☺

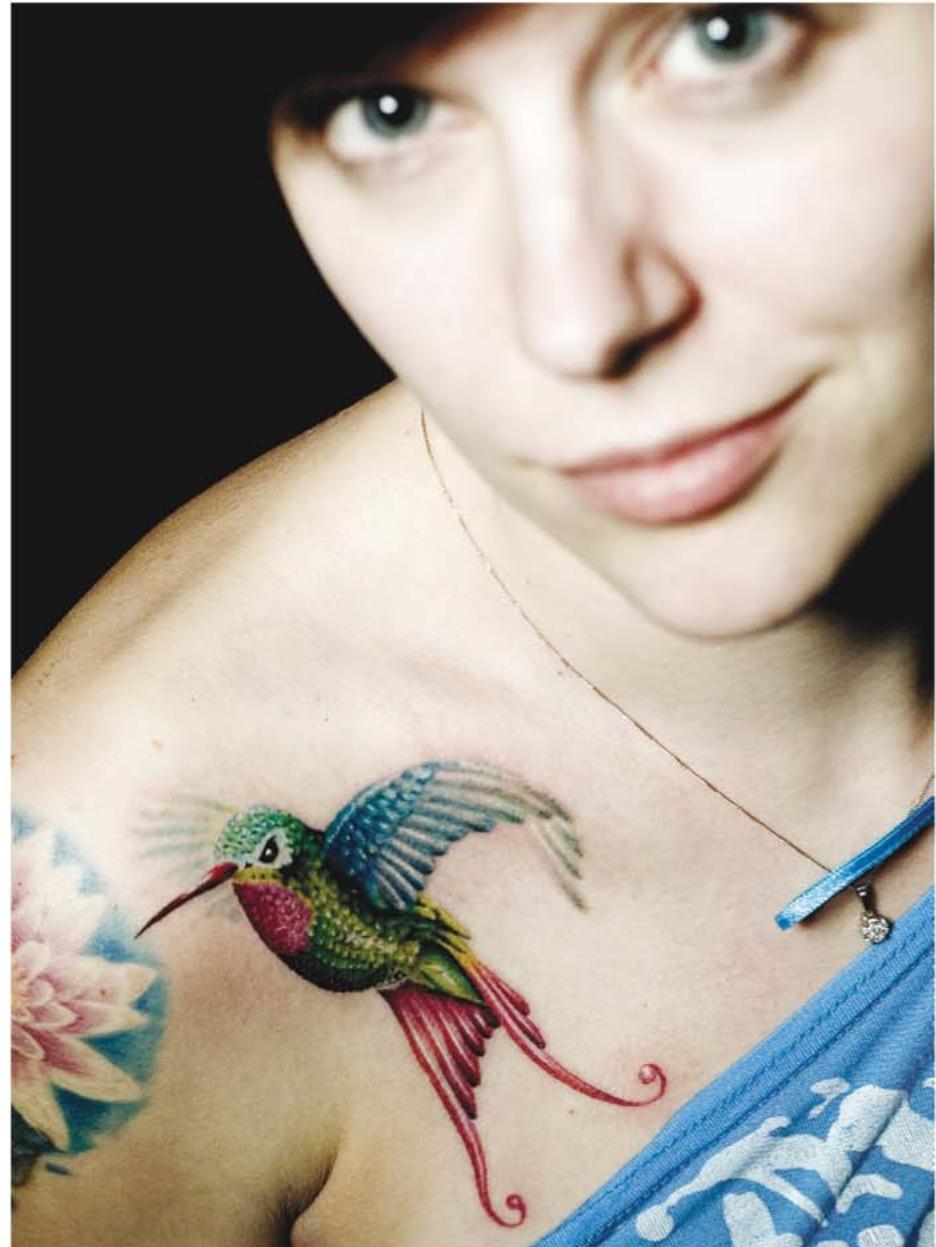




a little about why they want the tattoo, as this can help me to produce the best piece for the customer and give them an idea of what I can do for them as well. I am also a large fan of cover up work. Many people find this strange, but I really enjoy the challenge it presents and I think that it helps improve the rest of my work. There is a large demand for cover up work and I like to show people that just because it is a cover up it doesn't mean it has to look like one. I really enjoy it when people have no idea that there used to be an older tattoo underneath.

I have a few plans for the future but none of them are definite because you never know where this industry may take you. I would like to go and work in Japan at some point because it was the first place where tattooing became an art form from the old tribal styles. I think I could learn things from a whole different perspective over there and that is something that really appeals to me.

I would also like to go back to Poland at some point and open my own studio. I have been away from home for 4 years now and although I enjoy it here, there really is no place like home. Whatever happens and wherever I go, I would like to be recognised as an artist that likes to do the best possible tattoos with the most detail rather than a few small tattoos with less.



**WHATEVER HAPPENS AND WHEREVER I GO,
I WOULD LIKE TO BE RECOGNISED AS AN
ARTIST THAT LIKES TO DO THE BEST POSSIBLE
TATTOOS WITH THE MOST DETAIL RATHER
THAN A FEW SMALL TATTOOS WITH LESS.**



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TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHY: MAX DOLBERG

CONVENTION OF TATTOO ARTS 2009

SAN JOSE

In its 5th year, The Convention of Tattoo Arts in San Jose, California, once again has shown why it is the West coast's premiere tattoo happening. Unlike a lot of the other conventions out there, San Jose bears the distinction of being a completely by tattooist, for tattooist event. As co-organizer Horitaka puts it: "This is an industry show that the public is allowed to attend."

It is this focus on tattooists that makes the San Jose Convention stand out from the rest. Absent are the endless rows of t-shirts, jewellery, and other distractions. Those booths not dedicated to making tattoos are kept at bay, with only 10% of available space being set aside for vendors. Other than that, it is strictly down to the business of putting ink in skin.

The weekend was kicked off Thursday night just down the street from the convention hall at The Anno Domini Gallery with San Jose's own Analog Tattoo Arts Kolectiv unveiling their newest book project: *BloodWork: Sleeves*. Produced by Analog founder Adrian Lee, the 350-page, 12 pound volume contains photographs, made by Max Dolberg of Full Coverage fame, showcasing 67 sleeves by 30 of the world's pre-eminent tattooists. Names

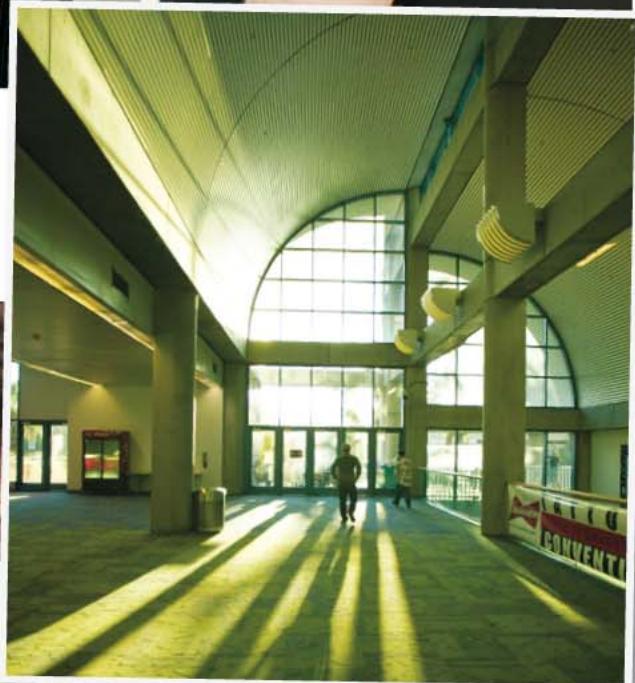
like Guy Aitchison, Horikitsune (Alex Reinke), Yutaro, Aaron Cain, Filip Leu, Mo Coppoletta, Mick Tattoo, Marcus Pacheco, Todd Noble, Matt Shamah, and Joel Long only begin to scratch the surface of the deep, deep pool of talent contained within these pages. Two years in the making and beautifully constructed, each book is a work of art unto itself. The Exhibition featured nearly life size prints of each of the multi-armed renditions from the book's pages as well as large projected video images of the tattoos. The turn out was heavy despite The Swingin' Utters playing a show right around the corner. After the exhibition, the festivities moved across the street to the Agenda Lounge for Analog's two-year anniversary party where the bands Ugly Winner and Panthelion rocked the house into the wee hours of the morning.



The next day, Friday, it was time to get to work. As the convention doors opened to the public, it was immediately apparent that the large crowds common to The San Jose Convention were going to be subdued this year. Blame it on the economy or maybe that it was Halloween weekend, but even what is arguably the U.S.'s best tattoo convention isn't immune from the diminished attendance that has been plaguing the circuit this year. Still, with such a strong list of internationally acclaimed artists in attendance, there were plenty of people taking the opportunity to get some ink. Contemporary artists like: Scott Sylvia, Grez, Trevor McStay, Mike



As the convention doors opened to the public, it was immediately apparent that the large crowds common to The San Jose Convention were going to be subdued this year.



Rubendal, Tim Hendricks, Aaron Della Vadova, Ichibay, Beppe, Demian, Lango Oliviera, Freddy Corbin, Bling Bling Roxx, Chris Treviño, Chuey Quintanar, Dana Helmuth, Adrian Lee, Grime, Horimasu, Jason Kundell, Juan Puente, Nate Banuelos, Shige, Rob Benavides, Inma, and Steve Byrne, to name a few were all working hard along side living legends such as Thom Devita, Bill Salmon, Goodtime Charlie, Jack Rudy, Shanghai Kate, and Kandi Everett. Sailor Jerry's widow, Louise Collins was on hand to share her knowledge and experiences. Mike Giant was also in the ☺

SAN JOSE

house all weekend spreading his mellow vibe and drawing a huge "San Jose" mural with a sugar skull in the Rebel 8 booth.

Friday also featured contests for the best Tribal and American tattoos as well as the reoccurring "Best of Day" contest, the winner of which received a trophy made out of a working tattoo machine from Lucky Supply and a horseshoe. Friday night was capped off with 2 great rock-shows at San Jose night-clubs. Conventions goers had their choice as Skate Rock legends The Drunk Injuns were headlining at The Voo-Doo Lounge while The Blank Club hosted Osaka's favourite pop punkers; Shonen Knife.

Day two was Saturday. It was also Halloween. Along with contests for best back piece and best black and grey, there was a Halloween costume contest. People really cut loose for this one. Along with the sexy sprites, an outstanding "smile now cry later" team effort, and a 12 foot tall Frankenstein (which took a full five minutes to make it's way to the stage for judging), convention goers were decked out as, among other things, a half dead bandita.



A storm trooper, and Beetle Juice. In the end, it was a pair of too cute for words children, costumed as Godzilla and Mothra, who took home the unprecedented \$1000 first prize. In true democratic fashion, the final vote was judged by crowd applause. Contest organizers were quick to point out

that the grand prize was to be split by the young winners with as contest judge Oliver Peck, put it over the P.A. system "not one fucking cent" going to the parents. It's worth mentioning that had he not been barred from competing due to conflict of interest, Horitaka's Tropic Thunder inspired get-up would have given everyone a run for their money. Once the convention doors were closed for the evening, attendees spilled out into San Jose's streets, bars and clubs, which were awash in costumes, revelry, and hedonism.

Sunday was the convention's final day.

Sunday was the convention's final day. As one would expect, things were getting pretty laidback at this point. I'm fairly sure I wasn't the only one feeling the effects of the previous evening's festivities.





The winding down was bitter sweet. With the overall convention vibe being one of an extended family get-together



As one would expect, things were getting pretty laidback at this point. I'm fairly sure I wasn't the only one feeling the effects of the previous evening's festivities. All the same, machines were still buzzing away and smiles abounded. Ichibay took the opportunity to draw an insane, 4-foot long dragon, in ballpoint pen, across the table in the Three Tides booth. Sunday's contests were for best new school, and best Japanese. For me, the day's highlight was an amazing dinner with nearly 40 friends, some old, some new, at San Jose eatery E&O Trading Company. The meal and conversation highlighted what tattoo people have in common, no matter where in the world we come from.

The winding down was bitter sweet. With the overall convention vibe being one of an extended family get-together, it was a chance for old friends to reconnect, new bonds to be formed and a rare opportunity to get an up close and personal look at the bleeding edge of the art form as it is cut around the globe. While all tattoo conventions may host talented artists who travel many miles to come together. The San Jose Convention of Tattoo Arts truly takes it a step further. Such a high concentration of talent is an exceptional treasure. I can't wait until next year. ★

Max Dolberg is the in-house photographer at Analog Tattoo Arts Kollectiv. He has photographed 2 books on tattooing and written on the art form for several magazines. See his work at www.maxdolberg.com



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Lee Mallett
Amanda West
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Lisa Priestley
Nick Whybrow
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Fil Norman
Toni Moore

Cecil Porter
Tanane Whitfield
Arran Burton
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The Ram Raid
Monsters In The Attic
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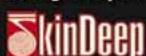


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INTERVIEW: NEIL PHOTOGRAPHY: MICK
MAIN IMAGE: NICOLE REED

KORPUS TATTOO

MICK SQUIRES

I first saw Mick sitting quietly drawing at last year's Paradise Gathering show in the US. Mick had his head down, obviously engrossed in his work so I wandered past, not wanting to disturb him. Later that day, I saw the drawing that he had been working on and it was amazing.

In his piqued my interest somewhat and I took it upon myself to hunt down his portfolio. Perusing Mick's art book made my eyes widen and my jaw drop with every turn of the page. His Colour realism had something that was just that bit different to all the other artist's work I'd seen that weekend at the 'Gathering' and considering the calibre of the invite only convention; that says a lot about his work.

Later that evening, we got a proper introduction by John Montgomery and from speaking to Mick, I knew straight away he was the sort of guy that eats, breathes and sleeps tattoos. The work on these pages bears testament to Mick Squire's obvious talents and passion for tattooing.

**WHAT ARE YOUR EARLIEST MEMORIES OF TATTOOS?
WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO START TATTOOING? WHEN DID YOU START AND WHERE?**

Well I would have to say the earliest tattoo memory would have been with my childhood friend when growing up, around the age of 5. My friend's grandfather had old war tattoos on his forearms which were so blurred you could hardly make them out. I remember he had an eagle and an anchor. So cool!

DO YOU THINK THAT THESE IMAGES OF BLURRY TATTOOS SPARKED SOMETHING IN YOU TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT TATTOOS?

I'm not totally sure, I know my first encounter with tattooing itself came from a friend who had a clown tattooed on his leg when we were 16; he came over as soon as it was done. I was amazed but it never entered my head that I would create them some day, I remember it like it was yesterday. I actually ended up working with the artist who did that tattoo on my friend.

SO HOW SOON WAS IT BEFORE YOU GOT YOUR FIRST TATTOO?

I had my first tattoo done at the age of 19; I was a computer engineer at the time. I had just repaired Chris Reid's computer and that was how I was paid for the job.

KORPUS TATTOO

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WHEN YOU PICKED UP A TATTOO MACHINE FOR THE FIRST TIME, DID YOU FIND IT EASY TO TATTOO?

No not really, I was always creative when growing up. I always wanted to become a graphic designer. But I think I struggled to get a grip on using needles and ink as a medium. I really did stress when outlining, but always felt comfortable with a magnum.

HOW DID YOU FURTHER YOUR TATTOOING CAREER. DID YOU GET AN APPRENTICESHIP OR WERE YOU SELF-TAUGHT?

I did do an apprenticeship with Chris Reid in Geelong, Victoria, I annoyed Chris for about 6 months and worked at the counter in any free time I had serving customers. I was then thrown in the deep, in sink or swim... It lasted only a matter of weeks before I was tattooing anything thrown at me; some came out ok some not so. I do think I observe really well though, if I wasn't tattooing I'd be watching my fellow tattooists and using what I had observed to see if it would work for me. I still do that to this day.

I think that going down the apprentice route is definitely the right way to go, but as long as it is with someone with good skills to



I HAD THE PLEASURE OF WATCHING A FELLOW ARTIST WORK ACROSS FROM MYSELF YESTERDAY AND TATTOO SOME TESTICLES, NOW THAT WAS DIFFERENT!



explain why you would go about a particular technique in a certain way. I definitely think art school is a big step up for anyone looking at becoming and successful tattooist as well. I never went to art school but if I had, I think I would have learnt a lot quicker and my drawing skills would be better if I had done that. One of my best mates in the industry Chris Lennox was made to go to art school for a year before starting his apprenticeship; the difference it made to his artistic capability is amazing.

SO NO FORMAL ART TRAINING FOR YOU THEN?

Absolutely none at all, everything I know is from reading or from information passed down from other artists. It's high on my priority list to do though; I want to know more of the technical side of why things work the way they do. I really want to know why the choices I make work the way they do.

DO YOU THINK THAT FORMAL ART TRAINING IS BENEFICIAL TO A TATTOOIST?

I think it depends on the type of tattooist you are but I think every artist could take information away from formal training and apply it to their craft. From what I've seen first hand it has made average artists into exceptional ones. Most of the more painterly styled artists tattoo the way they do due to their background.

WHAT'S THE ATMOSPHERE AND AMBIENCE LIKE IN THE STUDIO?

Korpus is the most amazing place to work; we cover most styles of tattooing between us. I work with Steve Cross who is an amazing artist; I have so much to learn from him, Steve's more illustrative in his artwork. Brian Graydon who works in most styles and is so versatile and clean, Miles Monaghan who

specialises in large scale Japanese and Jaclyn Rehe who specialises in American Traditional and who I want to be tattooed by next. All of us get along so well and hang out outside of the studio, best of mates really. Most guest artists don't want to leave at the end of their stay!

WHAT ABOUT CONVENTIONS, DO YOU**GET TO WORK AT MANY?**

I've done quite a few now, last year my highlights were "tattoo of the day" at the "Sydney Tattoo Expo" and best of show at the Australian National Convention. I was also privileged to work along side John Montgomery and Joshua Carlton at "Hell City" in Phoenix in the US and fortunate enough to be asked by Gabe to work at the "Paradise Gathering" which is an invite only convention at Hancock in Massachusetts and work alongside Mike DeVries, Josh Duffy and Jeff Johnson. This year I've been at the "Singapore Convention", "Surf n Ink convention" in Surfers Paradise in Queensland, where I was runner up to Nikko Hurtado in the best portrait category. "SINZ" in Christchurch New Zealand working alongside my buddies Byron, Chris and Dave Undead, "The Sydney Tattoo Expo" where I took artist of the show and the Logan



IN AUSTRALIA THERE AREN'T MANY ARTISTS DOING COLOUR REALISM SO I SEEM TO ATTRACT A LOT OF ATTENTION HERE AND A LOT OF CLIENTS WILLING TO FLY IN FROM ALL OVER AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND TO GET WORK.

Convention in Queensland where I took out tattoo of the show. Coming up I have "Hell City" in Ohio, thanks to Gaston from FK Irons who I'm sharing a booth with, "Ink n Iron" in Long beach, California and now "Tattoo Jam" in Doncaster, UK thanks to Neil!

BLIMEY! THAT'S A CRACKING PEDIGREE OF AWARDS. HOW DO YOU THINK PEOPLE AT THE SHOWS PERCEIVE YOUR WORK?

The response seems to be really good. I think I'm doing well and have a pretty good understanding on how things should be constructed. I'm lucky in a way in Australia there aren't many artists doing colour realism so I seem to attract a lot of attention here and a lot of clients willing to fly in from all over Australia and New Zealand to get work. What I like doing a lot of is mixing traditional style of tattooing with realism which makes most types of artists happy to see that.

DID YOU FIND THAT YOU MANAGE TO STEAL SOME OF THE OTHER ARTIST'S 'MOJO' WORKING AT THE CONVENTIONS?

Totally, I have learnt so much from just watching so many amazing artists doing their thing. Nikko Hurtado in particular has been a big influence in watching what he does with his different blending and colours and so on.

YOU HAVE TRAVELED PRETTY EXTENSIVELY; DO YOU ENJOY THAT PART OF YOUR LIFE?

Yeah it's the best working abroad! I've worked in Singapore where I found it's more oriental based, which I love, most of my tattoos I have are oriental. The composition is one thing I have so much to learn from. America, which seems to have everything, much like here in Australia but on a larger scale and with so





IMAGE: NICKO REED

FOR ME, PREPARATION IS KEY IN REALISM, MAKING STUFF UP ON THE FLY DOESN'T ALWAYS WORK OUT AS WELL ALL THE TIME UNLESS IT'S SOMEONE LIKE JEFF GOGUE, HA HA!

many talented artists located everywhere and in such remote places. New Zealand is much like Australia but on a smaller scale, its very multi cultural but it also has that deep history within in Maori tattooing which is so amazing!

DURING YOUR TRIPS ABROAD, HAVE YOU NOTICED ANY PARTICULAR AREAS THAT ARE MORE WELCOMING TO TATTOOS AND TATTOOISTS THAN OTHERS?

For sure New Zealand, the customs officers as you walk into the country ask where they can have you tattoo them ha ha! I think with the heritage behind it in their country, its just so accepted. I love that place!

WHO ARE YOUR MAIN INFLUENCES, INCLUDING BOTH TATTOOISTS AND THE MORE TRADITIONAL ARTISTS?

My main artists that have influenced me would be Jeff Gogue who I get to paint with very soon, with my very good friend and UK born artist Claire Reid, Nikko Hurtado from California, Mike Devries who I was lucky

enough to share a booth with last year at the Paradise Gathering, Joshua Carlton who is a good friend of mine, Stefano who I stayed with in NY, Nick Chaboya a top guy, Bob Tyrrell who always sucks me into staying out to all hours of the morning at conventions, ha ha! John Montgomery who is very versatile and who I stay with in California, Australia's own Byron Drechsler who has taught me a lot of my techniques that I use within realism based tattooing, Paul Braniff who is one of the greats of Black and Grey realism in Australia, Owen Williams from Melbourne one of my good mates and so good at what he does, Trevor McStay who is Australia's most well known tattooist and many, many more. Paul Acker, Uncle Alan, Boris, Filip Leu, Derek Noble, Shige, Rachi Brains, Robert Hernandez, Paul Booth, and Dave Undead it just keeps going...

DO YOU HAVE A FAVOURITE STYLE OF TATTOOING? CAN YOU DESCRIBE YOUR OWN STYLE?

My style is realism; colour realism is what I usually get asked to do. Although I love black ↩



and grey tattooing. I really enjoy heavily contrasted pieces that just punch. But if I'm asked by my client do what I want to do, it usually involves mixing illustrated imagery with realism, it's so much fun to create something from scratch right out of your head or from a reference of a photo and convert it into a traditional tattoo with hard lines and solid, bold colour and then mix it in with hyper detailed, no lines realism.

**HOW DO YOU GO ABOUT DESIGNING A TATTOO?
WHAT PROCESSES DO YOU GO THROUGH TO GET
FROM THE INITIAL IDEA TO THE FINALISED DESIGN?**

I usually get the client to email me ideas; I try not to do in person consultations now. I

always leave the finer details out and forget key points. With digital records, I sort my emails out into a database and then I can always go back and reference the words used by my client. I then see if the images they have sent me are usable, if not, I research more appropriate images and email them back and make they are fine with what I have found. I then Photoshop any areas needed. For example boosting contrast, burning areas darker, maybe flaring a certain part of the image to greater the depth of perception and so on. I then print the image out on 100gsm matte photo paper and work over the image with Prismacolor pencils to get the image colour to where I'm happy. For me preparation is key in realism,

**I LOVE THE BEACH; I USUALLY HIT THE SURF.
I LOVE TO PAINT, USUALLY IN OILS. IT ALLOWS
ME TO LOOSEN UP AND TRY THINGS INSTEAD
OF GUESSING ON SKIN.**



making stuff up on the fly doesn't always work out as well all the time unless it's someone like Jeff Gogue ha ha!

**WHAT DOES MR SQUIRES DO WHEN HE
IS NOT TATTOOING?**

I live about an hour and a half drive from where I work in Melbourne. I live about 10 minutes from where the Great Ocean Road starts (12 apostles) I love the beach; I usually hit the surf. I love to paint, usually in oils. It allows me to loosen up and try things instead of guessing on skin.

**WHOSE WORK DO YOU WEAR AND WHO WOULD
YOU LIKE TO GET TATTOOS FROM?**

Rachi Brains and Rose Hardy tattooed the girls on my neck. Owen Williams did my right sleeve, which is an oriental based Phoenix. Chris Reid has done my left sleeve; Claire Reid did my chest piece. I have a rose done by Derek Noble, Miles Monaghan did my traditional American "mum" tattoo for me, Steve Cross did my crown on the back of my neck and My legs have bit and pieces done by myself.

I was meant to trade tattoos with Joshua Carlton last time I was in the States but with time circumstances, things didn't work out, hopefully next time I'm over there. I want a leg of different Salvador Dali portraits but done by a lot of different artists such as Bob Tyrrell with their own little twist on them.

**WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF
BEING AN ARTIST?**

The art, my clients and my friends. Watching their reaction of when they get to see in full what I've done on them in the mirror. My fellow tattooists that I'm such good friends with that I have only met through tattooing and being able to do what I love everyday around the globe. I'm so fortunate to be doing what I do.

**IS THERE ANYBODY YOU WOULD LIKE TO THANK
FOR HELPING YOU OVER THE YEARS?**

Yeah, that would be great, I'd like to thank a few people. I would like to thank Chris Reid, the man who took me on and gave me the opportunity to create what I have now, Chris Cashmore and Byron from Inkjecta with hooking me up with Pneumatic tattoo machines that have allowed me to construct my style in colour realism, Steve Cross and Brian Graydon for giving me a home at Korpus, Marty Roesler for guiding me in my younger days, Claire Reid for helping me understand more of the artistic side of tattooing, John Montgomery for giving me my break in the States, Dave Undead for being a top mate and a great artist to bounce off, yourself Neil, for giving me the honour of being in your magazine and inviting me across for Tattoo Jam in August, I'm very excited to come to the country where some of my routes lay and Brett, Nicky P, Zac and Patty Wheels for being top mates!

**IS THERE ANY OTHER INFORMATION THAT YOU
WOULD LIKE TO ADD?**

My 'mumma always said; 'stay in school, do your homework and eat your greens' ha ha... ★



**MY 'MUMMA ALWAYS SAID; 'STAY IN SCHOOL, DO
YOUR HOMEWORK AND EAT YOUR GREENS' HA HA...**



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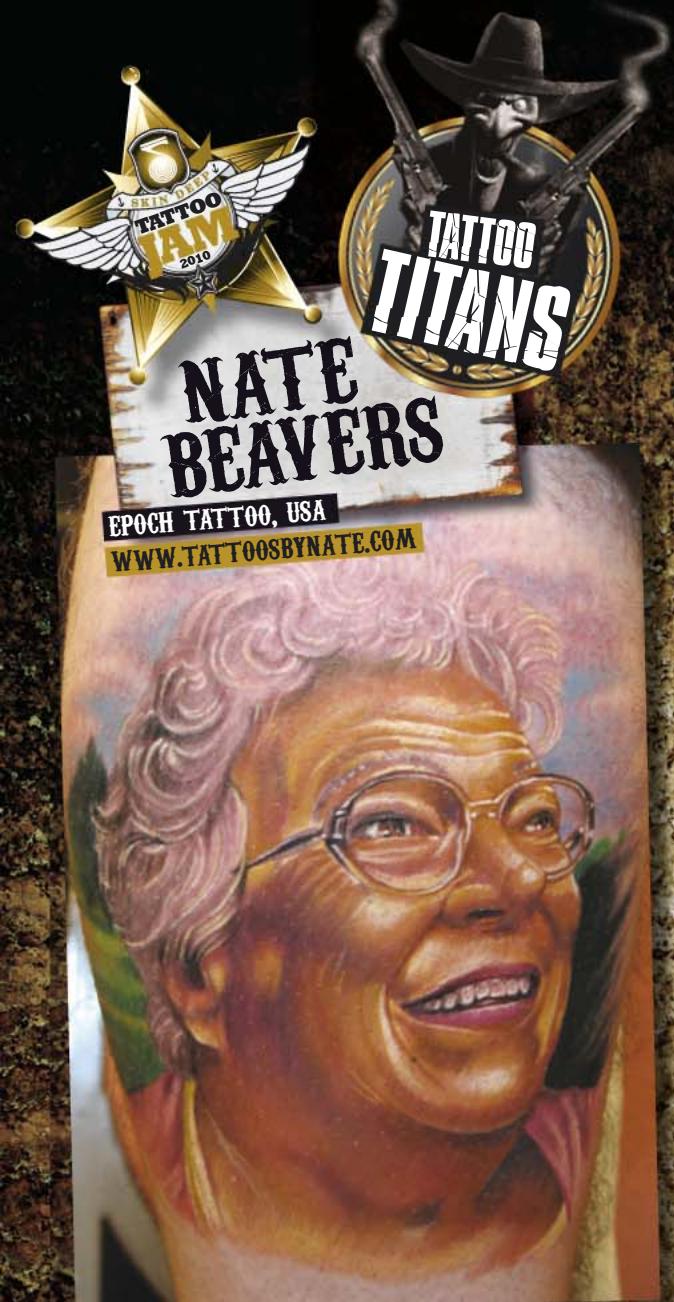
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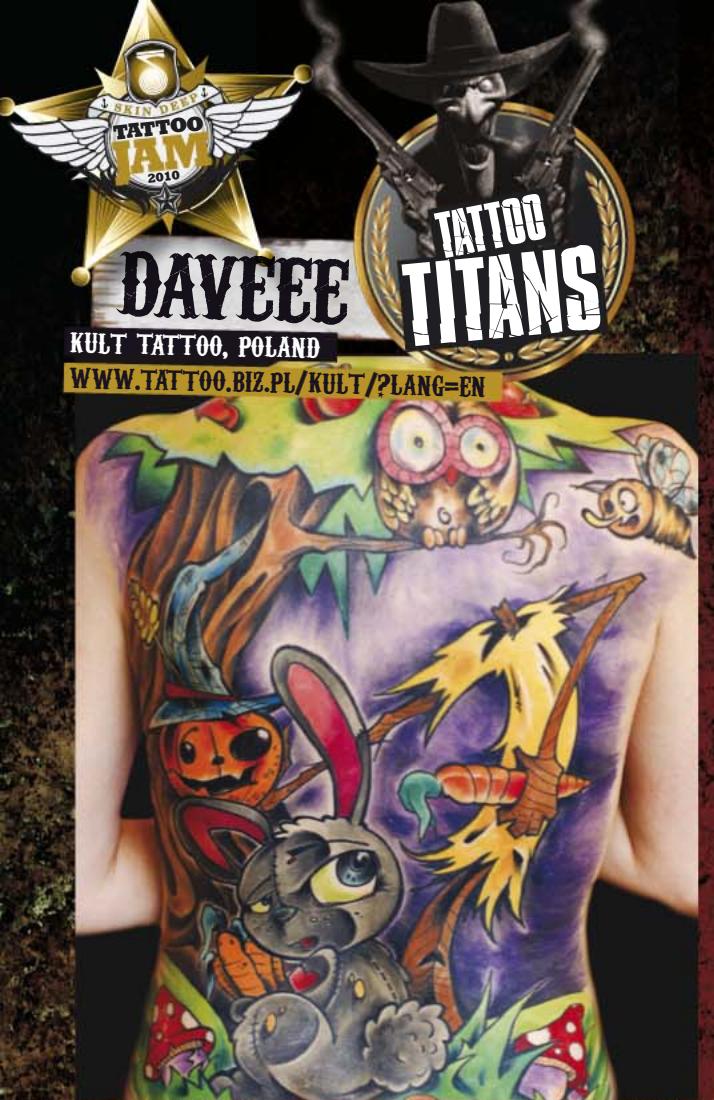
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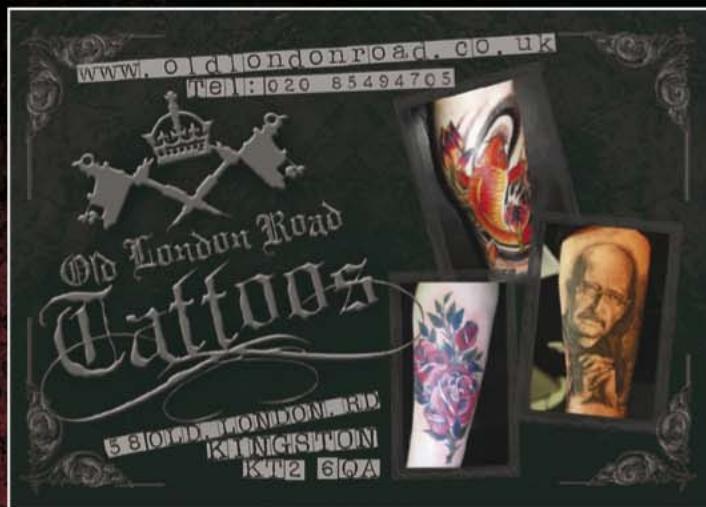
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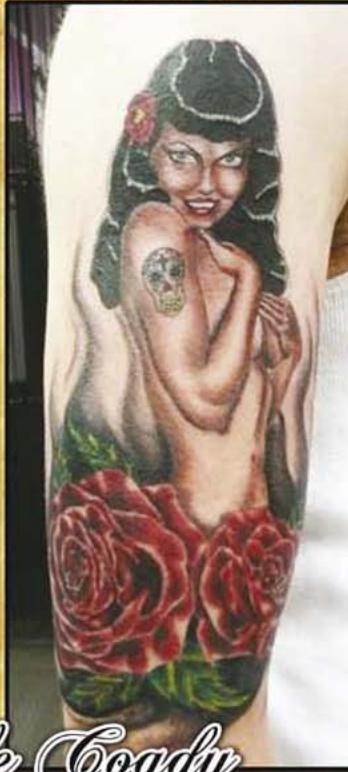
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Goldilocks

& The Bank Robber

Oh come on, you're too old to be reading about the three bears, and in any case, this is a true story, so if you are sitting comfortably, I will begin. Whatever next, an honest crook? There's an oxymoron if ever there was! When I asked Dave how he got into the tattoo game, he pondered his answer before responding. Then he told me, 'in prison.' I cautioned him as to what he next said to me, as he never knew where he might read it in the future, but he was happy to continue.

TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHY: STEVE KELLY [WWW.MYSPACE.COM/STEVEKELLYPHOTOS](http://WWW.MYSSPACE.COM/STEVEKELLYPHOTOS)

It transpired that his former profession was, as you might have guessed from the title of the feature, a bank robber. Now, you don't meet one of those every day, do you! Today, Dave is a totally reformed character, who expends all of his energy on his growing tattoo business, wife Wendy Keezer (who you see here), and his two young children Kaden (4) and Gage (1)

My assistant photographer, Simon Webster, had grabbed a few pictures of Wendy during Daytona's Biketoberfest event while she tended bar at the Dog House, but as I wanted to get the full scoop, I flew back to Florida a couple of weeks later to track her down. Not that that proved difficult, as I knew where she had been inked. What I didn't know at the time was, that she was married to the boss, and owner of the studio, who is simply known within the industry as Crazy Dave. I'm glad that he understood what I had come looking

What I didn't know at the time was, that she was married to the boss, and owner of the studio, who is simply known within the industry as Crazy Dave.

for when I arrived sniffing around asking for a broad called Wendy, things could have become ugly really fast otherwise. I wonder if he still has any sawn off shotguns?

Dave was given a five and half year stint in prison for his succession of bank jobs. He met tattooist AJ Johnson while in the joint, a man who tutored and mentored him in the art of ink, and put him on the right track to move forward in a positive way with his life. Since his release, Dave has had the honour of working with the likes of Tony Olivas, Thomas Jacobson and Mike Caricco. He also gained a





Goldilocks

& The Bank Robber

lot of tattoo knowledge from Chris Blinston and Boulevard Bill.

Fast forward to the present day: Dave's mammoth 1500 square foot, five booth, five artist shop, which he and Wendy started in 2008, is located at 1386 through 1388 North Nova Road, Daytona, Florida, and goes by the name of Hardcore Tattoos; but it is a whole lot more than just a top quality tattoo emporium! It also encompasses Daytona's Last Call, a sort of after hours club, where you bring your own bottles of booze and an attitude to party. It is open from 2:30 in the morning until 7am, and is only closed on Mondays. While I was in there, I couldn't help noticing the stripper poles and the punching bags, diverse or what?

25-year old Wendy, is one of Dave's biggest fans, and has given her body over to his ink machines. Her sleeve has taken about a year so far

Hardcore Tattoo artists are made up of: Crazy Dave Keezer (of course), Paul 'Squabolo' Feinauer, Jimmy 'Mashed Potatoes' Rogers, the aforementioned AJ Johnson, and Jeff Hall. Not to be outdone, Wendy Keezer has recently become the in house body piercer.

Six days a week, 33-year old Crazy Dave can be found honing his already considerable tattooing skill, perfecting the passion for ink that he truly loves. His wife, 25-year old Wendy, is one of Dave's biggest fans, and has given her body over to his ink machines. Her sleeve has taken about a year so far, and there are plans for her legs



next. But Dave wasn't the first to lay ink into her skin. This native born Floridian considers herself to be something of a tattoo collector, they are her way of showing the world who she is, a 'be yourself' type of person. Wendy's initial tattoo was her backpiece, no piddling miniature piece of flash for this young lady; she was straight in at the deep end! The artwork is poignant too; the sky blue and black wings were taken in memory of a lost friend. The initial rendering took something like fourteen hours to complete, but after meeting and falling in love with Dave, it has since been further refined. Wendy's super bright sleeve is based around an Aztec theme, as she has always been interested in Aztec culture. Another fascination, this time of snakes, led her to choose the emerald green tree boa that you can see coiled on her upper arm, her forearm boasts two baby emerald green tree boas, which in stark contrast, are bright red, the colour in which they are born. Wendy's interest in snakes doesn't stop at having them inked either, she actually owns a rabbit wolfing, nine foot long, African python, which she has bizarrely named Angel.

Currently, Crazy Dave and Wendy can often be found at many of America's better tattoo conventions, but they have a strategy to broaden their horizons in the coming years by adding the European tattoo circuit to their travel plans with a view to keep things fresh. "Well that's the idea" Dave quipped, "We will just have to see which countries are happy to let me in!" In the meantime, he satisfies himself by telling his local customers to 'fuck the rent, get a tattoo.'

Now, I should end this by writing something like, and papa bear Dave said, 'who's been sleeping in my bed,' but due to the appearance of Kaden and Gage, I think that we already know the answer to that! So instead, I will conclude with, and they all lived happily ever after. The end! ☆

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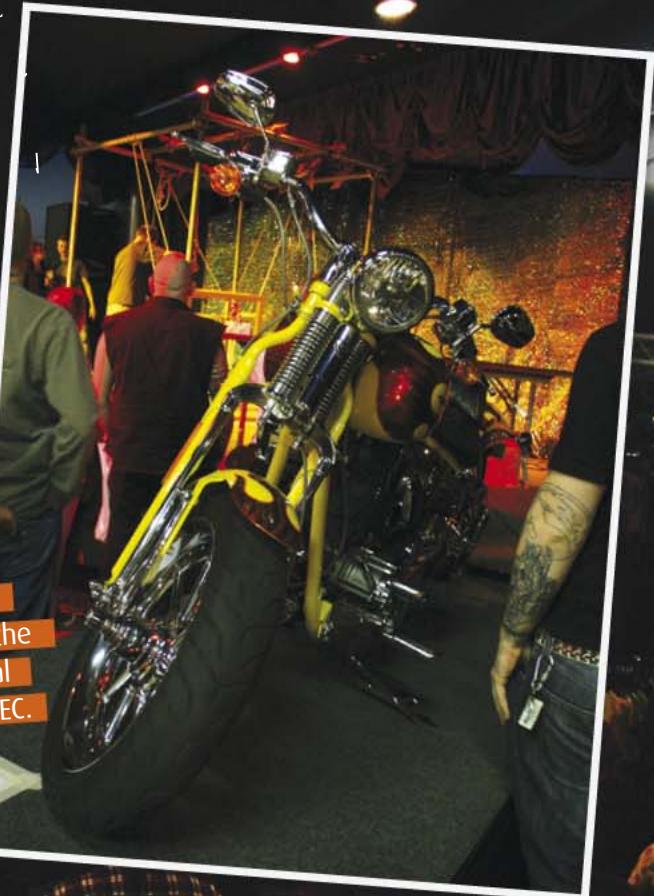
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INK & IRON

After two years absence from the UK tattoo show scene, the Ink & Iron Tattoo Convention gladly opened its doors to the public. All be it in an new, smaller venue after a few political issues that abruptly stopped the show taking place at the NEC.

The Ink & Iron is the longest running show in the UK, notching up close to fifteen successful shows. This year the organisers had moved the convention to a nightclub on the shores of Edgbaston reservoir and on this bright, sunny and warm Sunday, many flocked to the venue to help welcome back an old friend to the show scene.

I took the opportunity to head down to Birmingham on my bike and the ride down was wonderful, blowing the cobwebs out of not only myself but my bike too. Along the way I met up with quite a few others





I was greeted by a vast array of heavy metal in the guise of chops, trikes and bikes, all lined up against the shore of the lake, making for an impressive sight.



who had the same idea and arriving at the venue, I was greeted by a vast array of heavy metal in the guise of chops, trikes and bikes, all lined up against the shore of the lake, making for an impressive sight.

As the name suggests the Ink & Iron has in the past, combined both a superb collection of tattooists and custom bikes. This year the Iron part of the show was a little on the thin side but talking to one of the organisers he said that as it was a new venue, they wanted to see how things worked out and are hoping to increase the custom bike display further next year. Inside, the first thing I noticed was the lack of lighting – not a good start for a tattoo convention - still, this is something that will be addressed next year and as tattooists are the mothers of invention, all sorted out their own lights, so things got started pretty quickly.

The sizeable queue outside started to shuffle in and the show got on the road and the familiar tattoo machine sound filtered through the building.

Wandering about the venue I couldn't help thinking that this show was somewhat hastily put together and the booths could have been more defined but again, the artists settled themselves down to a day of putting ink into the skin. No sooner had they started than the first band hit the stage. Sadly they were turned up to eleven and as always happens at many shows, everyone was drowned out by the excessive noise until they finished their set. On the subject of bands, there was a female Ramones tribute band, now I'm not a Ramones fan and think that they couldn't

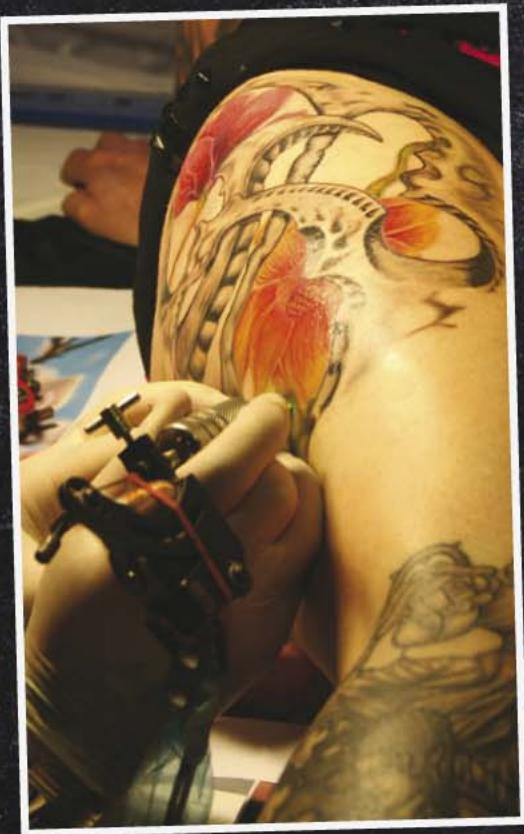
carry a tune in a bucket and these ladies, although very enthusiastic, made me want to stick pencils in my ears. Just my opinion you understand, and it must be hard to get tunes to please every palate.

By now many of the artists had started to produce some real nice tattoo work. The artists list consisted of about 35 mostly UK artists, with Lawrence Ah Ching hand tapping on a plinth in the middle of the room. Artists of note included John Trehearne, Terry Fuller, Amanda West, Dawnii and Kev Shercliffe. There was a healthy selection of Birmingham's finest but with a noticeable absence of guys like the Modern Body Art crew, Leah Moule, Rich Pearson and Helen Brown but to be honest, I doubt if the organisers could have fitted any more artists in.

Robb and Ruth from Eternal Tattoos were also on hand to offer their unique blend of black and grey work. It was fantastic to see Ruth working her first show after a long period of self-doubt and child rearing, but she said after, she thoroughly enjoyed and couldn't wait to do more. It's so nice that folk will get a chance again to get some of your superb artwork Ruth.

As the afternoon moved on, the judging started strangely in a room behind the stage, which I thought was quite odd actually denying the audience a view of the work being judged. Later there was a

By now many of the artists had started to produce some real nice tattoo work. The artists list consisted of about 35 mostly UK artists



VIRKY BY MUFF © ULTIMATE ART, SUTTON COLDFIELD



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AL BY HEF HUGHES © ABSOLUT INK, COLWYN BAY

'Tattoo Parade' on stage but this could have easily been combined with the judging as the show and tell was a little on the quiet side, with many not choosing to show off their ink to the crowd.

The venue was quite well suited to a tattoo convention with a raised balcony running along one side, giving the public a good view of the guys working on the ground floor.

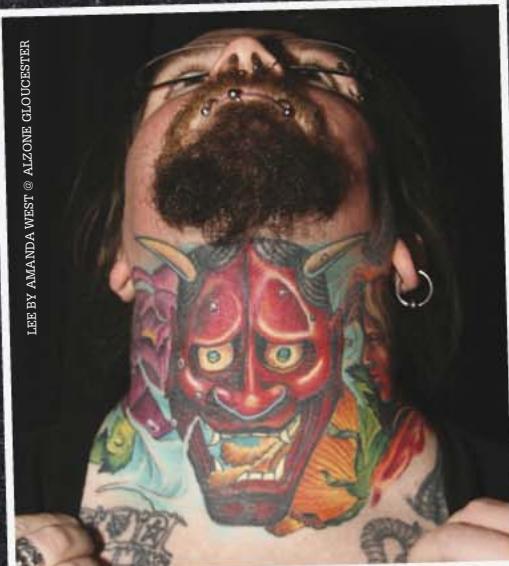
As the day wore on, we were treated to a suspension act with Alice and her cohorts suspending themselves from hooks in a pastiche of a French restaurant set, which looked visually interesting; getting gasps and looked upon slack-jawed at their fakir-type feats.

Not long after, the awards were handed out and as per, folk started to leave, including myself. I had a long (and very cold!) ride home, but I was kept warm by the fond memories of the new Ink & Iron show.

So the Ink & Iron was a huge success and I have no doubt, got its foot firmly back on the rungs of the tattoo convention ladder with the rebirth of a superb show. Next year I am assured, will be bigger, better and dare I say it – brighter?

I can't wait. *

The venue was quite well suited to a tattoo convention with a raised balcony running along one side, giving the public a good view of the guys working on the ground floor.



LEE BY AMANDA WEST © ALZONE GLOUCESTER



AIMEE BY TOMMI © NO REGRETS, CHELTENHAM

Male Individual

Steve by Tommi @ No Regrets, Cheltenham

Female Individual

Aimee by Tommi @ No Regrets, Cheltenham

Black and Skin

Dan by Ken Denny

Male Tribal

Wes by Spider

Female Tribal

Tasha by Dawnii @ Painted Lady

Portrait

Jake by Craven

Bodysuit

Hazel by Paul Rollett @ Eclipse Tattoos, Derby

Male Leg

Chris by John Treharne @ Skin Creations, Cardiff

Female Leg

Hazel by Paul Rollett @ Eclipse Tattoos, Derby

Male Sleeve

Rob by Tommi @ No Regrets, Cheltenham

Female Sleeve

Dianne by John Treharne @ Skin Creations, Cardiff

Male Back

Paul by Spacey @ Bizarre Ink, Scotland

Female Back

Ruth by Robb @ Eternal Tattoos, Dorking

Male done at convention

Danny by Donna Reid @ Infinite Ink, Coventry

Female done at convention

Vicky by Muff

Tattoo artist of convention

John Treharne @ Skin Creations, Cardiff

Jeff Ortega

EVIL FROM THE NEEDLE

Jeff Ortega is the owner of **Evil From The Needle**, a characterful little studio situated slap bang in the middle of the melee of Camden Town. The shop is one among many in the alternative capital of London, but not all the shops in the area can boast the consistent quality of work that comes out of Evil.

Jeff started tattooing at Rising Dragon in New York in 1994, taking over Evil from former owner Bugs a decade later. He takes his inspiration from everything from graffiti to Renaissance paintings. These days Jeff is weary of the convention circuit, but can be found working on both sides of the Atlantic, dividing his time between the London shop and Brooklyn Tattoo in NYC, working alongside Willie Paredes and Adam Suerte. He is famed for his striking colour work but prides himself on his ability to take on a variety of different styles, producing original custom work every time. It's no style; it's just Jeff style.

HOW DID YOU GET INTO TATTOOING?

I had just quit my job and I offered to help the guy that was tattooing me up to that point set up a new studio. I offered to help him set up the shop because I wasn't expecting to end up tattooing. Long story short we opened up the shop, he was short of a receptionist and asked if I wanted to help him out 'til they found someone, and basically by the time the shop had really taken off I was in the middle of it, and I was apprenticing without really knowing I was apprenticing. Until a few months later they just got so overwhelmingly busy that they needed to find someone new, and because I was there and he knew that I could draw and I was into the whole tattoo thing and I was friends with everyone in the shop it was just natural for him to ask me, so I ended up learning how to tattoo.

WHO WAS A FORMATIVE INFLUENCE EARLY ON IN YOUR CAREER?

I mean, there was a lot of influences but it wasn't as wide and varied as it is now. You had your big names in tattooing, guys like Filip Leu and Guy Aitchison, the real heavy hitters. I was impressed by them and the tattoo work that they were doing but they weren't necessarily influential and what I wanted to

end up doing, or why I wanted to end up doing it. Darren Rosa at Rising Dragon in New York, and Myke, these guys who I started with, they were all illustrators or comic book artists before they started tattooing, and they were more of an influence on me than all these other bigger names because I saw them apply their own artwork to their tattoos, so when someone came in for a custom piece it was an original custom piece; it wasn't something that was fabricated from other existing material. And that's what I knew I wanted to end up doing, I wanted to be able to sit down and draw whatever a customer asked me for, really draw it, like come up with it and put it together myself as opposed to put it together from outside reference.

WHAT KIND OF NON-TATTOO ART ARE YOU INTERESTED IN?

I would say urban/modern art. But as a kid what initially made me sit down and start drawing and really get into art was graffiti. And it's similar, well the art form itself obviously isn't but the level of originality in the graffiti scene compared to the level of copycats, it's very similar to the whole tattoo thing. Art-wise it could stem from Renaissance classical stuff all the way to graffiti.

HOW DOES THE BUSINESS SIDE OF TATTOOING COMPARE TO THE CREATIVE SIDE?

It's difficult for some people. I've heard myself from really talented tattooists who are more than able creatively and who have enough of a following and are good enough and have enough experience to open shops but just don't want them. They either know themselves that they're not business owner material or they just want to focus on the artistic side. I



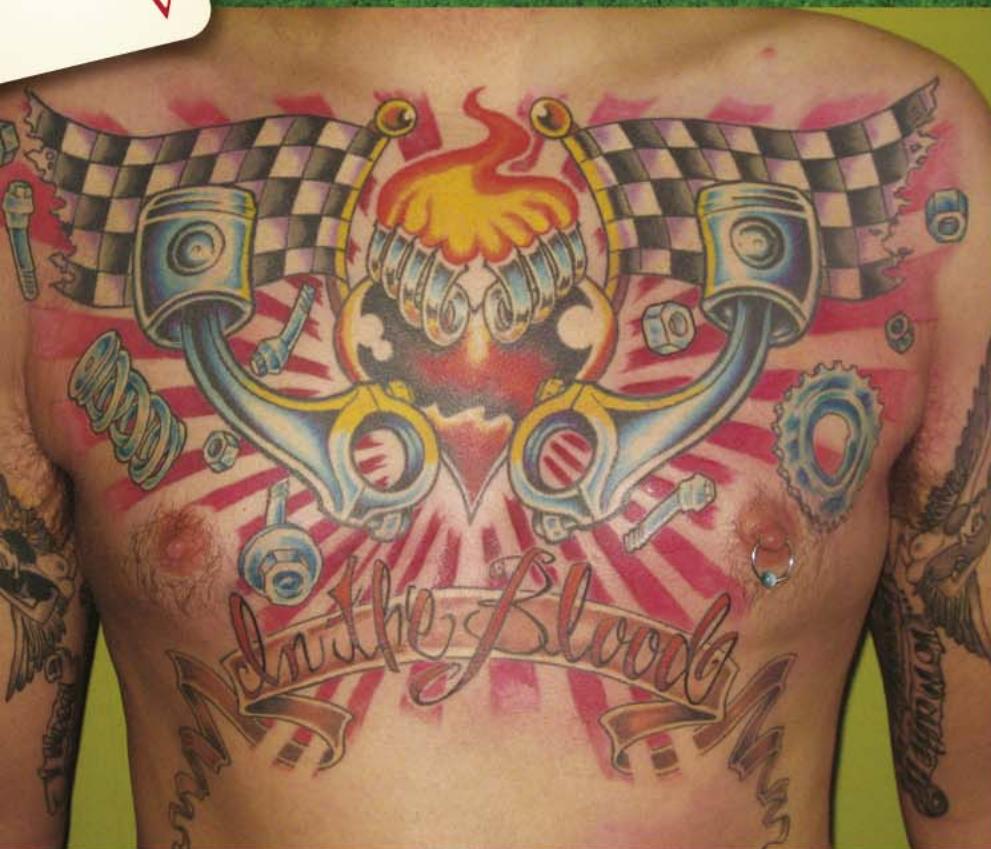
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AS A KID WHAT INITIALLY MADE ME SIT DOWN AND START DRAWING AND REALLY GET INTO ART WAS GRAFFITI.



say to people I've either been blessed or cursed with the ability to balance them out and do them both.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO ARTISTS WHO ARE TRYING TO BREAK INTO THE INDUSTRY?

If they know that they're limited artistically yet they really have a love and a passion for tattooing... you can't tell someone to be original if they're not original. If they can't come up with the goods themselves, if they can't produce original artwork but they do really love and believe in what they're getting into and at least copy properly, then that's a good start. What I'm saying by copy properly is not to identically copy, but to use what's out there and find a way to make it your own. I've stressed that point before that if you're not adding something to the industry you're taking something away. And I stand by that. I think that if you can't bring something new, or at least push yourself to try to do that, then you're just taking from it and you're taking from a lot of people that have really attempted to bring something new to the industry and give something of themselves artistically.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR STYLE?

I don't know, I think I've been doing this long enough now to realise that it's no style; it's just Jeff style. In terms ↗

of what styles I'm able to tattoo I'd like to say everything. And that was one of my goals as well when I was starting out was to just be the kind of tattoo artist that wouldn't have to say no to anything. What I sit down and draw is what comes out of me and I try to stay true enough to any original style it came from. But I'm not doing it by the book. If there are rules to be followed, then I'm not following them.

I don't want to do anything incorrectly either but that's why I don't do traditional Japanese tattooing, because to me it's about making something look good and feel right with the body, and look right as an image. If somebody wants a really technically correct tattoo then they need to go to someone who does traditional Japanese tattooing, or whatever.

**WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST
MEMORABLE TATTOO PROJECT
THAT YOU'VE WORKED ON?**

It would have to be the Ganesh project on Marcus. I was quite nervous going into it because we did the headfirst and as we were doing the head he came up with the idea for doing



**WHAT I SIT DOWN AND DRAW IS WHAT
COMES OUT OF ME AND I TRY TO STAY TRUE
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FROM. BUT I'M NOT DOING IT BY THE BOOK.**





the rest of the body and I thought it would work quite well with the whole mouth in the armpit thing. We had a few consultations and I drew it on him first and I was really, really nervous about it when we started it.

YOU JUST DIDN'T THINK IT WAS GOING TO WORK WELL?

I thought it was 'gonna work, I didn't know it was 'gonna work, and it worked out really well. It's a really impressive tattoo and it's really different, I think, in the way that it was laid out and the way that it does work, it does have that sort of 3D element or that realistic living feel to it, so when he moves his arm around the trunk moves and the whole mouth thing. Up to this point, although I've done a lot of original stuff, I think that's the one that stands out the most.

HAVE YOU GOT ANY MORE WORK PLANNED FOR YOURSELF?

Yeah, I'm in the process of collecting tattoo machines, which is not happening as quickly as I'd like it to happen, but yeah I'm just trying to fill up my entire left leg with tattoo machines done by different people, so everybody could do their own original version of a tattoo machine. It's the equivalent of putting stickers on a suitcase as you travel the world, you have this one little stamp by this person that you either know or you really admire that you might not have a close relationship with but at least they tattooed you.

ARE THERE ANY PARTS OF THE BODY YOU WON'T TATTOO?

I won't get terribly private, no. We just got a call here a couple of weeks ago from some porn star who wanted writing around her asshole and we all refused to do it. It's got nothing to do with whether you're male or female, it's got nothing to do with sexuality, it's just, I could find better ways to spend my time. And to tattoo as well because usually when you get into some nooks and crannies it's just difficult. It's difficult to tattoo, period, but, you know, when you're working on certain parts of the



THERE IS ALSO SOMETHING EXTREMELY FULFILLING WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT THE RESPONSIBILITY INVOLVED IN WHAT YOU'RE DOING TO PEOPLE.

body it's just stuff that I'd rather not have to deal with.

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT DOING WHAT YOU DO?

From a selfish point of view, it epitomises whenever you hear someone say 'it's great to do something you love for a living', because it's not only what you're actively, physically, technically doing, which is very challenging and very fulfilling, and a lot of fun, and very creative; it's just something that naturally causes you to want to keep moving forward and want to progress and get better. There is also something extremely fulfilling when you think about the responsibility involved in what you're doing to people, and how you're changing someone physically for the rest of their life. And you put

a lot of smiles on a lot of people's faces. There's nothing bad I could say about the work itself or the lifestyle that comes along with it.

WHAT ABOUT THE CLIENTS THEN? TELL ME WHAT MAKES A NIGHTMARE CLIENT.

That's something else that I haven't really had to experience very often, especially since I've been here because I think people know what scale of work I do, or that they're prepared to come in and just hand over their idea as opposed to being really nitpicky about things. That's all the freedom that we want, ☺



for someone to come in and tell us what they want and let us take it from there because we know what's going to work best. I think the nightmare clients are the ones that come to you for something yet they don't let you give them what they're asking for.

YOU STARTED TATTOOING IN 1994 AND YOU'VE BEEN BETWEEN THE US AND THE UK IN THAT TIME. HOW HAVE YOU SEEN THE INDUSTRY CHANGE AND WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE INDUSTRY IN THE UK AND US?

It's changed equally from both ends just in terms of social awareness and social acceptance and popularity. I'd say, even though when I started in 1994 the guys who were experienced then thought that was it,



ESPECIALLY NOW WITH THE TV SHOWS AND EVERYTHING, THERE'S JUST MORE AND MORE PEOPLE GETTING TATTOOED AND GETTING REAL COVERAGE.

that it wasn't going to get any bigger than it was then. Especially now with the TV shows and everything, there's just more and more people getting tattooed and getting real coverage. What I do tend to notice a lot from the American scene is that I see a lot more of that thing that does it for me, more individual, original artists coming into the scene. In Europe I see a lot more of the styles. I see how popular the traditional Japanese is and the old school Sailor Jerry stuff is, and that is probably about 80% of the work that I see being done in Europe and the UK. It's done by some very able and talented tattooists but it's just very repetitive. All the American guys that come to Europe for the conventions have a wider variety. Maybe that's just what I'm aware of in terms of the scene in the States but that's what

I make it a point to be aware of, are the original artists that are putting in their time and effort and ability into doing something new and different and fresh.

ARE YOU TATTOOING ANYWHERE OTHER THAN THE SHOP THIS YEAR?

This year I'm sitting out the convention circuit. The shop won't necessarily; we'll probably get booths at some of the conventions if the guys want to go. I've just become a bit disinterested in conventions, not because they're not fun but just because I've got a whole lot going on here and I think my time is better spent here taking care of my regular customers. The past few years I've done a lot of conventions, which means a lot of time away, and I just feel like staying at home for a while. 

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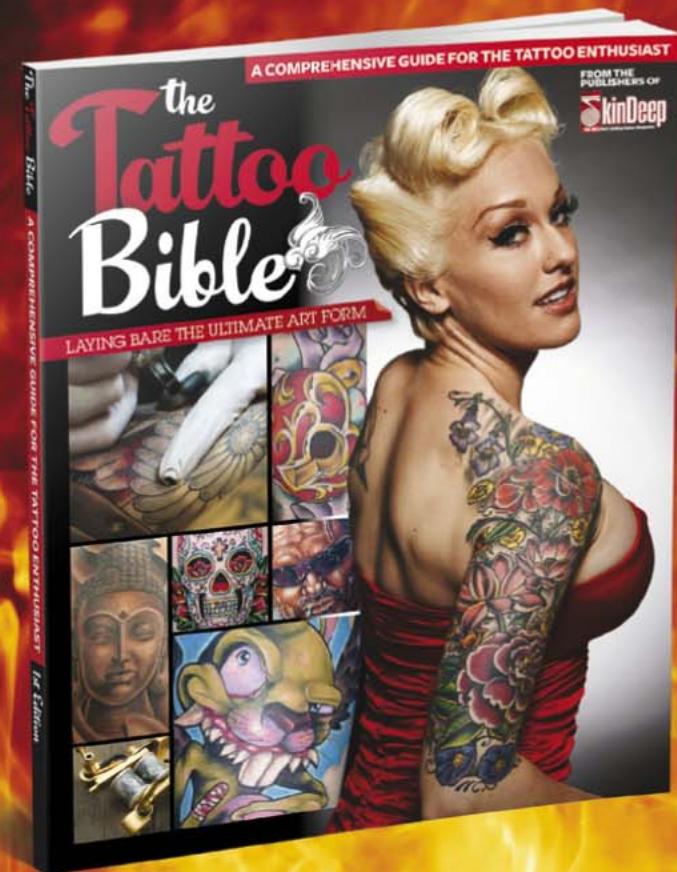
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WARNING

Please be aware that this article may contain potential 'triggers' which, for some people, could increase the compulsion towards self harm.



TEXT: TONY JONES

PHOTOGRAPHY: CHARLOTTE LANGLEY & İHSAN KEMAL

TATTOOING AND

SELF HARM

I will put my cards on the table straight away; I am not a qualified psychiatrist and my experience of self harm extends no further than picking the occasional scab. I have never, to my knowledge, suffered from any mental health issues, although some may disagree.

However, many people appear to have an insightful understanding of my mental health whenever I reveal my tattoos. It is a familiar scenario and one that many tattoo owners will have experienced. Around the dinner table or at the bar, the conversation turns to body art, and very soon you can expect the ever faithful, backhanded insult

"Well, isn't tattooing just a socially acceptable form of self harm?"

Despite being a clumsy, broad brush stroke statement, the 'self harm' asperion is a tasty sound-bite on which a prejudice is easily hung. It has annoyed me for many reasons, not least because I wasn't entirely sure if it could possibly be accurate.

IS TATTOOING A FORM OF SELF HARM?

Needless to say there is no one simple answer to the question and a discussion on the Skin Deep website forum revealed a vast array of opinions and experience. In much the same way that tattoo culture comprises an enormous variety of different folk, the relationship between self harm and tattoos is similarly complex. But it appears that there IS a relationship and that many self harmers also happen to be tattoo owners.

COINCIDENCE?

One of the people I interviewed for this feature made a very good point, stating that "Some tattoos can be described as "mutilation", or "defacing a body". It has to be said that some of the more extreme tattoos, and here I'm talking everlasting job stoppers on the face and hands as well as gross and shocking tattoos, may well be done as self-

harm. A desire to outwardly show what is inwardly felt to be abhorrent or repulsive. To validate those critics who have destroyed someone's self-esteem to the point where they truly feel themselves worthless of cherishing."

Whilst this is undoubtedly true in a minority of cases, most would accept that this scenario is rare and not representative of tattoo culture in general.

Although examples such as those outlined above would appear to support the suggestion that tattooing is self harm, closer scrutiny shows that the relationship between the two is far from being a direct one. There is no direct 'cause and effect' transaction at work.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

There are many differences, but in order to understand them we must define the specific form of self harm that we are talking about. In strict literal terms, any 'harm' or 'injury' which a person consensually inflicts upon themselves could be referred to as self harm, and so getting a tattoo could be said to fit this coarse definition.

However, the term 'self harm' has some very specific implications pertaining to clinical psychology and this more widely understood definition has little in common with tattooing. Beyond the physical aspects of the two procedures (ie the breaking of the skin, the blood and pain), there appears to be little correlation with the associated psychologies.

SELF HARM IS THAT THE RIGHT TERM?

'Self harm' is the most frequently used term to describe the behaviours discussed in this feature and so has been adopted by the author throughout. Quotes from other sources may use different expressions.

motivated one as self harm invariably is.

Favazza says that 'cultural practices imply activities that are faddish and hold little underlying significance. Piercing of earlobes or nose to accommodate jewellery are examples of such practices.' Given the proliferation of tattooing into mainstream culture since his book was written, I would guess Favazza might suggest the same 'faddish' status surely applies to many tattoos. Often there is no enormous psychological

and (most interestingly in terms of this article) physical and psychological healing.

These traditional motivations are also often cited by modern tattoo fans. It should be noted that these motivations are primarily positive and regenerative experiences with primary gains; much different to the underlying negative psychological processes at work in the case of self harm.

There seems little correlation between the primary motivations for getting tattoos and the

I AM GETTING SICK OF PEOPLE ASKING ME FOR THE STORY BEHIND MY INK. COME ON NOW, I HAVE A CAKE TATTOO - WHAT STORY DO YOU THINK IT IS?



TATTOO

- Pre-meditated and considered behaviour
- Results usually for purposeful display
- Primary attention gains
- Proud of results
- Result is key focus

SELF HARM

- Reactive, compulsive behaviour
- Results not usually for display
- Secondary attention gains
- Not proud of results
- Process is key focus

RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE

In his 1996 book 'Bodies Under Siege' Dr Armando Favazza explores the historical, anthropological and clinical associations between body modification and self harm. Although the mushrooming popularity of tattooing has dated the book somewhat, it remains the definitive text on the subject and discusses self harm and the psychologies involved at great length. According to Favazza's research, self harm and tattooing are only lightly associated, the conclusion being that body modification is primarily a culturally motivated process, rather than a psychologically, biologically or socially

backdrop to a person's love of tattoos or indeed behind which design they get.

As Skin Deep forum contributor Monkey Chick (not her real name) brilliantly puts it: "I am getting sick of people asking me for the story behind my ink. Come on now, I have a cake tattoo - what story do you think it is? No, it is not a tribute to my dead baking Grandmother. It's 'cos I like cakes!"

I'm not sure there is much evidence to support the notion that Monkey Chick's tattoos are a manifestation of a troubled psychology or a form of socially acceptable self harm. But who knows? Perhaps there is some deeply hidden cake-related trauma she has yet to reconcile.

IF NOT SELF HARM, THEN WHY?

Although many tattoos and piercings can be considered purely decorative, most people do still have deep personal motivations for collecting tattoos. In the epilogue to 'Bodies Under Siege' Fakir Musafar, the father of the modern primitives movement, lists a series of recurring motivations in cultures where body modification has been prevalent. These include rites of passage, peer bonding, insignias of respect, status symbols of bravery or courage, initiation, protection from evil, spiritualism

responses to a survey* into the most common reasons for self harming.

- 72% To control their mind when it is racing.
- 65% To feel relaxed.
- 58% To feel less depressed.
- 55% To feel real again.
- 47% To feel less lonely.
- 40% To atone for sins.
- 20% To respond to 'voices'.
- 12% To respond to evil spirits.

(Favazza and Contario 1989.)

*It should be noted that the respondents in this survey were female. This is noted not for its relevance but simply for the sake of factual accuracy.

Many psychologists will admit that self-harm is not an entirely negative process. It is accepted that the process of self harm can stop and reverse a downhill spiral of psychological 'dysfunction'. In some cases self-harmers have stated that harming halted the compulsion towards suicide.

Most experts agree that a less destructive coping mechanism would be preferable, but there are a minority who suggest that society should simply accept self harm as a valid and effective process. Favazza himself describes self harm as a 'morbid form of self help'. Given that all psychology and behaviour must exist within the framework of what current culture deems acceptable, I'm not convinced that society will embrace self harm any time soon.

COMMON DENOMINATORS.

My work and social life often include long periods of time lingering around in tattoo studios and the subsequent interactions with the people passing through them. One of the reasons the self harm aspersions un-nerved me so, was because I perceived an increased prevalence of self harmers in that tattoo studio environment. Whilst it could be said that the evidence of self harm is more difficult to conceal in this environment, I must point out that a similar prevalence was not as evident in my work in health clubs as a fitness professional, given that similar amounts of usually covered flesh was on display here too. Anecdotal it may be, but self harm and tattooing appear related in some way. Like many areas of society and culture, there seems

to be a cross over point where self harm and tattooing meet.

One of the most frequent motivations for acquiring a tattoo is as a means of taking ownership of our bodies, in reclaiming ourselves from the constraints of what is, or is not, socially acceptable. Tattoos and body modifications of the various sorts are a definitive means of retaining control of the one thing over which we have absolute ownership. Conventional society can take many things from us, but our bodies are always ours to use as we wish.

Given that self harmers experience a loss of control as part of the psychological turmoil they feel, it is not surprising to find some common ground with the world of tattooing. For those yearning some kind of ownership and responsibility, those who wish to reclaim themselves from other influencing forces, tattooing makes perfect sense. Many of the people I interviewed whilst researching this article stated that tattoos were a reward to themselves, a positive re-affirmation of their self worth, a display of their strength and their convictions. These appeared to be common sentiments of both the tattoo fan and those wishing to be free of their compulsion to self harm.

If someone is looking for some correlation between the art of tattooing and the psychological profile of self harmers then this is the closest they are likely to get.

I CONTINUE TO USE TATTOOS AS A PICK-ME-UP, EVEN WHEN THE RESPONSE IS LESS THAN POSITIVE FROM THOSE AROUND ME.

A FINAL THOUGHT.

"To not have holes in your body, to not have tattoos, may be debilitating – this is something people have to consider. They may not be getting the most out of life because they don't do these things – that's the point. People may be missing beautiful, rich experiences because of cultural bias and conceit." Fakir Musafar

SKIN DEEP FORUM DISCUSSION ON TATTOOS AND SELF HARM.

LuciiFera

"The tattooing has absolutely no link to self harm in my case. It is done purely for the end result, I find tattoos incredibly attractive, I (don't) go through that pain as some kind of catharsis. In other word, the pain of being tattooed really sucks. I hate it. But I put up with it knowing that I will have a gorgeous new piece of artwork."

Combat Kitten

"I continue to use tattoos as a pick-me-up, even when the response is less than positive from those around me. It feels positive but I can't help feeling that there are two people stuck inside my skin - the more conventional career woman who is sensible, professional and ambitious, and the tattooed gal who is rebellious and extrovert!"

TATTOOS

"Tattoos have a distinct anti-authority appeal. The origin of this appeal may come from the Christian proscription of tattooing and the resulting European laws against the practice. Whatever the source, tattooing today has the aura of the forbidden about it.

Second, tattooing may have inherent appeal due to the pain involved in the operation and the permanency of the design; thus tattooing is restricted to the brave and dedicated.

Third, and most important: in some circumstances, people are deprived of the opportunity to acquire and display the ordinary means of identifying and presenting the self.

Although all three factors are obviously related it is the final

one, that deprivation of the opportunity to acquire and display the usual and desirable means of self-identification that we see as the most basic understanding of tattooing." Edgar & Dingman – 1963
"Tattooing and Identity" International Journal of Social Psychiatry, Self Harm

SELF HARM

"Endemic self-mutilation often exists in repressive settings such as correctional institutions. Self mutilation in such settings has generally been interpreted as a coping mechanism that offers a means to express defiance, gain transfer to a different unit or to attract sympathetic medical help." Dr A. Favazza. Bodies Under Siege – 1996



SELF HARM BEHIND BARS

Both tattooing and self harm are both prevalent in correctional institutions. Whilst some 'prison tattoos' have a specific inherent message, there is often a deeper psychological motivation too. Both tattooing and self harm have been interpreted as an expression by the inmate or patient to demonstrate ownership, defiance and retain control of some aspect of their lives.

Inky Lady

"I find it quite worrying that some people think of tattoos as "self harming" I consider mine to be self improvement!"

Custom-art-tattoos

"In my opinion the difference between harm and benefit is pretty obvious. No matter if you cut your arm off, get a tattoo or take the dog for a walk, the only difference between benefit and harm is: does it make you happier or more miserable in the long term? Other people's opinions really don't matter, and it rarely hurts to make this clear - It's *your* body."

Kitten Pie

"I haven't ever used tattoos as self harm because they're too pretty to be associated with that time in my life. I want my body art to represent good times in my life & empowering moments. I don't want to carry round the worst parts of my life! I already have scars on my body to remind me of that."

PSYCHOLOGIST

Dr. Tracy Alderman Ph.D. is a licensed clinical psychologist and expert on self harm based in the US. She is also the author of *The Scarred Soul: Understanding and Ending Self-Inflicted Violence* (New Harbinger Publications) and has written about the relationship between tattoos and self harm. I asked her about the links.

more likely to engage in self-harm. It may be that we are more likely to notice self-harm on people with tattoos as we are drawn to looking at their flesh a bit more carefully. That is, while checking out their ink we might just stumble upon a scar or recent injury that we may not have noticed if we hadn't been looking at their tattoos.

Are self-harmers more likely to have tattoos?

Let me just say, the research to answer this question accurately just doesn't exist. That being said, I would speculate that, yes, self-harmers are more likely to have tattoos. Self-harmers often view themselves as different from others, misunderstood, and sometimes invisible. By getting tattoos, self-harmers become part of a group that is similar in some ways (often misunderstood, different from others) and literally become more visible. Additionally, those who formerly self-harmed may choose tattoos as a method to cover scars and to create something

For most people, I would say that tattooing is self-decoration, not self-harm. Tattoos are designed to enhance the body's image and to bring art to our most personal possession – our selves. While the process of getting a tattoo may be quite painful, the result is often beautiful (hopefully!). Self-harm, conversely, is a behavior borne from emotional pain and utilized to decrease those overwhelming feelings. Most who self-harm are likely to keep their injuries from others.

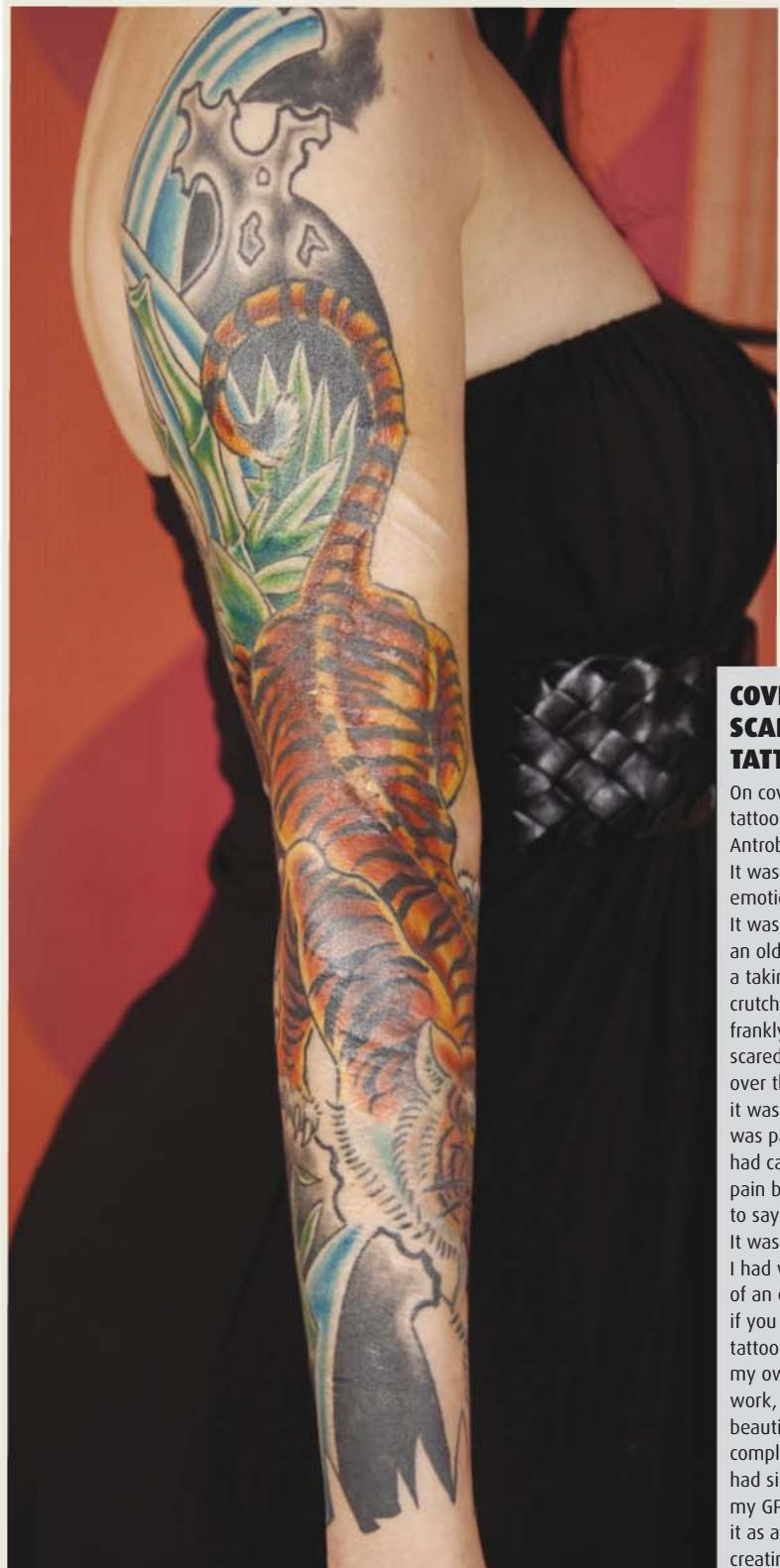
Are tattooed people more likely to engage in self-harm?

Dr TA - As far I can tell tattooed people are not

RECENT NEWS

Around one in ten 11-25 year-olds – mainly but not only girls – will deliberately harm themselves at some point. According to the Centre for Suicide Research at Oxford University, admissions of under-25s who have damaged themselves deliberately with a sharp object have risen by 50% in five years, from 1,758 in 2004/5 to 2,727 in 2008/9.

Source - guardian.co.uk, Friday 12 March 2010



Author thanks

I would like to thank all of the people who contributed to this article and particularly those who agreed to be interviewed and who shared their experiences. Thanks also to IA for valuable input and to the contributors to the Skin Deep online forum discussion boards.

COVERING SCARS WITH TATTOOS

On covering scars with tattoos By Ms Lou Antrobus

It was such an emotional experience. It was a cut off for an old way of life, a taking away of a crutch. And quite frankly, that still scared me. The pain over the scars, well it was weird as it was pain, where I had caused so much pain before. I have to say I nearly cried. It was like a battle I had won, an end of an era. A rebirth if you wish. I chose tattooing to cover up my own crass handy-work, because it is beautiful. The best compliment I have had since was from my GP who admired it as a brilliant way of creating something positive and pretty out of something that at that point had been dragging me down.

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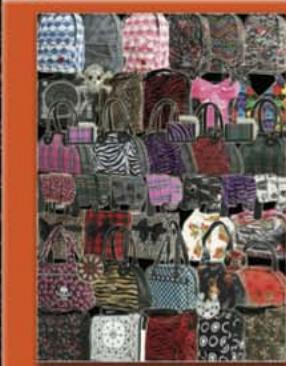


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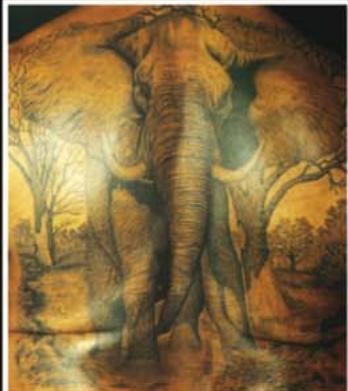
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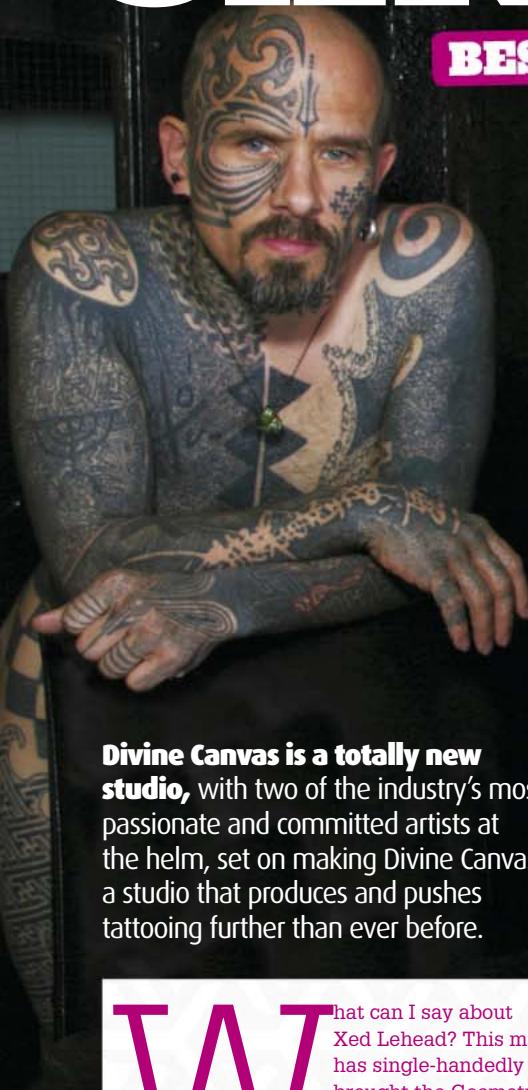
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DIVINE CANVAS

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Divine Canvas is a totally new studio, with two of the industry's most passionate and committed artists at the helm, set on making Divine Canvas a studio that produces and pushes tattooing further than ever before.

What can I say about Xed Lehead? This man has single-handedly brought the Geometric tattoo to the forefront of UK tattooing with his eye-wateringly beautiful tattoo designs. Xed is not only a very colourful character, but also a superbly talented and spiritual person who pushes himself and his tattoos to the limit, often to his own personal detriment.

Alan, or Mad Alan to give him his full title, is just that. Mad – but in a very nice and friendly way, with an infectious personality and obvious love for everything he does. These two friends have come up with what I'm sure will be a winning formula with the opening of Divine Canvas Bespoke Tattooing. Xed and Alan have put together a team of amazing artists that will, all make their mark on the tattoo scene in a very permanent way.

Welcome to the driving forces behind Divine Canvas Bespoke Tattooing - Xed LeHead & Mad Alan...

TELL US WHAT HAS TRANSPired SINCE YOUR DEPARTURE FROM INTO YOU.

Xed After I was unfairly sacked (by email) from IN2U for insubordination, initially I did a bit of travelling; I went to Spain, Australia and New Zealand. In NZ I stayed with Inia Taylor III... I didn't actually work properly out there, but did ink a few kiwis... I just went for a holiday but it was interesting to see how Inia carries on in terms of his work. When I returned to England, I went to work at Blue Fire Tattoo in Chingford, which was an interesting experience, you could say. Unfortunately things there didn't go as planned but I still ended up staying for six months. During that time I had been invited to start work at Nikole Lowe's new studio, she had a beautiful place lined up near London Bridge, but sadly that didn't come off and she

had to start looking for other premises. In the meantime I went back to New Zealand, didn't do much tattooing whilst there, not because I didn't want to but because there really wasn't much going on.

All in all that wasn't a happy period and when I returned to the UK, I didn't work for another six weeks. I had taken my equipment out of Blue Fire and Nikole was still having problems getting her studio sorted, so Alan introduced me to the owner of London Tattoo, a top fella named Sparx and I took a position there whilst waiting to start with Nikole when I suddenly realised that what I actually needed was to have my own place, as soon as possible; though at the time I had no idea how to make that happen as I was right in debt and technically homeless and the good ole' days seemed quite far behind me...

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SO WHAT WAS THE TURNING POINT THAT MADE YOU REALISE AFTER ALL THESE YEARS OF TATTOOING THAT YOU NEEDED TO OPEN YOUR OWN STUDIO?

Xed That point came when I realised that my way of tattooing is not always compatible with all studio bosses. The time had come to take control. I want to be able to work in an environment with the right people around me and if someone comes in and I am not comfortable with them, I want to be able to ask them to leave. Obviously being in control comes with its own kinds of stress, as I'm now finding out. I'm reaching an age where I don't want to be surrounded by anything but positivity; I've kicked the drugs yet again and I just want to get on with the work. I have enough chaos going on in my love life; I don't need it in my tattooing.

YOU'VE OFTEN SAID YOUR LOVE LIFE IS ALWAYS CHAOTIC.

Xed You could say that! I have a habit of getting myself into situations. The ups and downs of love are fuel for the passions of my work! Falling in love and the inevitable heartbreaks are wood to stoke the fires of creativity. But I'm happy to say it's actually reaching a stable period right now, kind of, maybe, and I am finding happiness as I find new balance in my life... And long may it last. I have been in my shell too long and I appear to be feeling far more sociable again after a lengthy spell in a self-created dark place. I have enjoyed re-opening my website and coming above ground again as I pretty much dropped right out and became basically unobtainable for about a year and a half. It's good to be back!

SO HOW DID THIS STUDIO COME ABOUT?

Xed One day Alan came and told me that he had come across this little shop via a good friend of his, Sarah, the owner of Wedge hair design that's next door to our little place and he asked me how I felt about co-opening it as a studio. I guess for me it came at the right time, I wasn't happy not being in control of things; working at London Tattoo was an experience, I had a some real good times there, but it wasn't what I really wanted. Thank God that Alan came along coz I had, as usual, no fucking



THE UPS AND DOWNS OF LOVE ARE FUEL FOR THE PASSIONS OF MY WORK! FALLING IN LOVE AND THE INEVITABLE HEARTBREAKS ARE WOOD TO STOKE THE FIRES OF CREATIVITY.

money; as always, anything I get my hands on pours through my fingers like water, I've always been crap with money, so Alan offered to put up the whole lot, and hey presto, Divine Canvas was becoming a reality...

DID IT TAKE LONG TO GET THE PLACE UP AND RUNNING?

Xed Not too long, but we did have to wait four months to get the change of use of the building allowed and we couldn't do anything until that was sorted. We had all of the stuff ready to install but were told that if we put one screw in the wall, it would jeopardise our position. Anyway it eventually came through and we were ready to go. Having said that, the studio

is still nothing like we want it to be, we still have a lot to do, a lot more art to put on the walls but the foundation is here, it just needs fine-tuning.

Alan Everything takes money and you have to remember that we have opened in a depression, but we are lucky enough to have Xed here, so we already have a client base. I believe that any new business will take a year to get rolling and we are crawling; but crawling forward as opposed to backwards. Aside from Xed, we have some amazing artists here; we have Eric Blanc, that kid is incredible; he really is our ace card. Eric will be the future of tattooing and I believe, his artwork is sensational, some of his paintings take years to

do but when you see the results, they just blow you away.

Xed Eric asks me almost nothing about tattooing; he just learns it all for himself. He just seems to suss it out. Initially I gave him a few pointers but after that I just left him, he's a natural born tattooist. I've known him for about 12 years and when he told me a few years ago that he was going to buy some machinery, I told him straight way that if I were ever to open a studio, I wanted him to work with me. I will put my cards on the table now and say that in a few years, he will be one of the top ink smiths in the UK...

XED, ARE YOU STILL DOING MAINLY DOT WORK?

Xed That's pretty much all I do, dots and lines, though I have done colour work on Alan, mostly because he keeps pestering me and I also have a couple of other customers who like to hassle me for colour work.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT WORKING IN COLOUR AFTER ALL OF THAT BLACK WORK?

Xed It's all right. Its not like working in colour was years ago when the inks were thick and messy. They are now nice and thin so it's almost like working with black ink. Having said that, colour work is still messy, I often open the bottle and before I start tattooing I've got ink all over me, colour splashes on the wall, ink on my head, so it takes a bit of getting used to.

Alan I could always tattoo your head pink!

Xed Someone will do that one day. I remember when I did Lucky Diamond Rich's



head black, Chris Cougar came up to me and said, "you fucking nutter, you did it". He remembered a conversation we had in Germany a few years previously when I had said that someone one day would have their whole body blacked out as the ultimate extreme end of the line; it just had to happen...

I never imagined back then that I would be responsible for doing so much of the actual work that turned Lucky Diamond Rich into the most tattooed person in the entire Universe. I was pretty chuffed that Chris remembered that conversation.

SO, WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR YOUR FUTURE AS A TATTOOIST AND FOR THE STUDIO?

Xed The hope for this place is that we end up with a really strong, creative team of artists here. With regard to the studio, we will be open to a certain amount of walk-ins but most of the custom work will be done later in the day when we will still be open, as both Alan and myself believe in having a studio where clients can visit fairly late.

Alan We would both envisage expanding in the future to encompass more than one shop. I've got many plans to push forward, but we have to walk before we can run. We have to get the flagship sailing before the rest of the fleet.

Xed Personally, I'd like to have a more private area where I could work alongside perhaps just one other artist, maybe two. Perhaps this could be a smaller shop near here. That's what I am aiming to achieve within the next year. Ideally I would like to work with Eric because I'm heading towards that quiet, spiritual way of working and

COLOUR WORK IS STILL MESSY, I OFTEN OPEN THE BOTTLE AND BEFORE I START TATTOOING I'VE GOT INK ALL OVER ME, COLOUR SPLASHES ON THE WALL, INK ON MY HEAD, SO IT TAKES A BIT OF GETTING USED TO.



that's what he is about; he just gets on with things in his own quiet, reflective way.

Alan Tattooing is an art form in its own right and there are very few people like

Xed Who can lay claim to having invented their own style? When you are in that position, if you decide that you don't need to do all the shading for example, you can ask someone else if they want to work with you, and that's ok, it's still in your own style.

XED, WHAT ELSE WOULD YOU LIKE TO SAY ABOUT THE STUDIO?

Xed With regard to the studio, this is phase one of three stages. I don't want to say too much about phase two or three at this time. I don't plan to leave England, but I do have plans to open a kind of winter retreat in a warmer climate. I know which island I am thinking of, but don't want to name it. All I can say is that it's a nice, quiet, sunny place, not a million miles away. It would be great to have a house there where I could see some of my select clientele who could afford to fly in and out. I'm hoping to go there next winter to research property prices. I love England and I really love London, well London is England. We are like all capital city dwellers around the world, for us there is nowhere else.

There is a sense of humour in London, which is unparalleled. I miss that when I am away. I lived in Germany for a few years and those stiff bastards really do have their humour glands drained just after birth! I came back to London ten years ago and I haven't looked back.

AND WHAT ABOUT THESE ROTARY MACHINES YOU ARE BUILDING? HOW DO YOU FIND THE TIME FOR THAT AS WELL?

Xed Ahh, those machines, well, for anyone who did not see the Tattoo Master interview with Uncle Roy and myself on those machines, I would like to say that they are completely built by Roy to original measurements and ideas by me. Initially, he was just making machines for me alone, but friends starting wanting them and Roy began to build them to order, and as they are sanctioned by me, that's why they carry my name with them. We will be selling them for him through the Divine Canvas studio. So if you're a registered artist, come on down and check them out in person, where I can give you a quick run down on how to set them up properly, coz if they ain't set right, you just won't get the true smooth rotary experience.

OK ALAN, LET'S PUT THE SPOTLIGHT ON YOU. TELL US ABOUT YOUR INTERESTING AND CONTENTIOUS PAST.

Alan I don't know what you mean! (laughs). Seriously, my dad was a barrow boy and my mother was a topless club hostess, so I grew up around the markets and clubs of Soho. About twenty years ago I got involved in car breaking through my interest in banger racing and from there things have just progressed. Nowadays I also do a lot of metal sculpting, artistic stuff. I've had a gas license for welding and making sculpture since I was sixteen, at first they wouldn't give me one until I took my grandmother along to B.O.C to sign for it so that I could get the bottles. Back then I used to make masks, that was my thing at the time.



HOW WAS IT GROWING UP IN SOHO IN THE DAYS WHEN SOHO REALLY WAS SOHO?

Alan Fantastic! That is what has made me the colourful character I am. I spent my school holidays selling chocolate and during the weekends I was in the clubs watching dad iron out the money, waiting for the shift to end so that we could all go home. Often I would spend time sitting outside with the working girls, who were waiting for someone to win a few quid and take them out for the night. Life was fantastic, we had our own collective; our own society and you can't buy into that.

I TAKE IT YOU STILL GET OUT AND ABOUT ON THE FETISH SCENE?

Alan I can't help it, it's my way. I really enjoy it. As you know, I'm pansexual; I love to dress up. I can't really say much more without being perceived as a perv, but that's what I am. And do you know that in all the years I've been going out on the fetish scene, I've never seen a punch-up. People there are respectful and anyway when you get all dressed up to go out, you don't want to get too messed up. I spend a lot of time getting ready, so I don't want to get

into any aggro, it might spoil my make-up.

I love dressing up, I've dressed up for punters in the past, I've been arrested for running a disorderly house where we were offering sex for money, give us your money, we'll give you sex. I've been in numerous places on numerous occasions in numerous odd positions with numerous people. I am often asked how I can talk so openly about it, but I don't really care, it has made me the person I am today, the colourful character I am. I have four children, two grandchildren and the most beautiful wife in the world, God bless her, and I don't know how she puts up with me.

HOW DO THEY REACT TO ALL OF YOUR ECCENTRICITIES?

Alan They don't like it at all. My kids think I'm out of order, they wonder how their mum puts up with it. They don't want me to go to parents' evenings and my daughter has asked me not to pick her up from school in the lorry because the other kids think we are gypsies and they have also asked me not to wear women's clothes to the school.

I am what I am, I'm very happy. I'm not in



denial about anything, I do have some down days and there have been some times in the past when I have not been at ease with myself, but now, I don't care. I'm well and truly out. If I want to wear women's clothes, I will. Everybody knows I'm outrageous.

ASH. WHY HAVE YOU DECIDED ON A CAREER CHANGE AND BECOME A TATTOOIST?

Alan I just love the decoration of the skin, the art. I have been shown so little up to this point, but it means so much. The power of colouring the skin is incredible. I just love tattoos; I got my first when I was thirteen. I'm fifty-two now and want to get more and more until I have no more space.

Why do I want to tattoo? Passion. I was getting bored at the breakers yard. I live quite well; you know that, you've been to my house. It wasn't out of necessity; I just wanted to do something new with my life. I don't want to retire; I'm not ready to join the pipe and slippers brigade.

I love ink and I love the environment that surrounds it. I love the sort of people it attracts. It also blends in well with my perverse side, as I like to see naked people getting tattooed.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR OWN TATTS.

Alan A lot of my most recent work has been done by Matt Difa (Jolie Rogue); he has been a family friend since the age of twelve. He's actually a close friend of my son and when I started to get tattooed again recently, it was my son who suggested going to Difa, or Matt the tatt as we call him. He is an amazing artist and between him and Xed they have covered my body.

IT WAS YOU WHO GOT XED INTO DOING COLOUR WORK.

Alan Yes. I love colour, there is enough black in my life and colour suits my skin. I will continue getting work until there is no more skin left and by that time I hope I will be proficient enough to work more on others. So far, I have been tattooing friends and they have all become regulars, no one has said that they don't want more work by me, so that's encouraging. I am trying to develop my own



WE ARE WHAT WE SAY WE ARE, DIVINE CANVAS, BESPOKE TATTOOING AND IF ANYONE GOES OUT OF HERE WITH A BAD TATTOO, WE DON'T WANT THE ARTIST WHO DID THAT WORKING HERE.

style, some people see a ship riding through waves; I see a ship grinding through cogs. I'm never going to be a Xed or a Filip Leu, but I will definitely be a character in my own right.

HOW DID YOU MEET XED AND HOW DID THIS COLLABORATION COME ABOUT?

Alan Our mutual friend, Dave Tusk, who thought that we were destined to meet each other, first introduced us and quite honestly, I have never met anyone that I got on so well with right from the start. Xed is my brother and my mentor. We have a really good relationship, he tells me off, like no one ever has; in many ways, he's like my dad.

SO WHERE DO THINGS GO FROM HERE?

Alan I've got plans for more studios but all in good time, we have to get this one going

first. We are what we say we are, Divine Canvas, Bespoke Tattooing and if anyone goes out of here with a bad tattoo, we don't want the artist who did that working here. We are not about ripping people off; we're far more about making people happy. Don't get me wrong, we need money; who doesn't, but it's more about the people and the art.

I ooze confidence. Life is not a dress rehearsal; this is it! I can honestly say that if there is anything out there that I want to do, I'll do it and I generally think about the consequences later. I've been involved in corporate business and I've been in and out of strife all of my life, but I'm a happy creature and I want to bring other people happiness. Surely that can't be such a bad thing?

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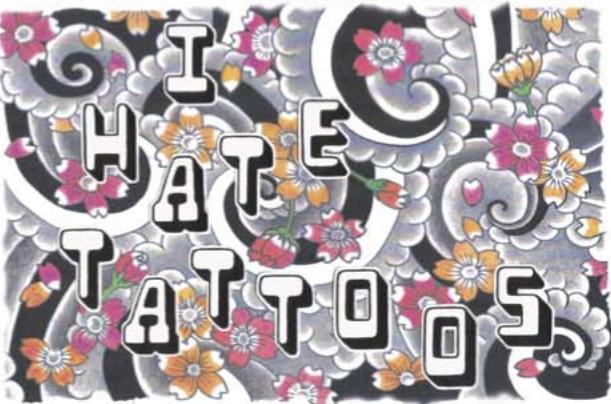
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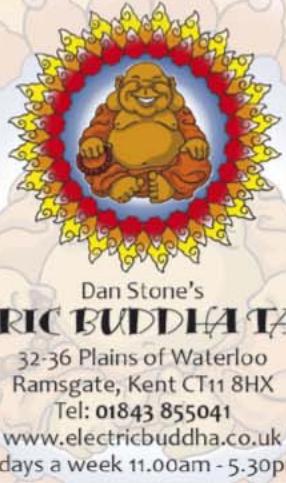
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COVENTRY INK

info@coventryink.com 024 7636 1035
www.coventryink.com/convention

AUGUST 14TH - 15TH

NORWICH BODY ARTS FESTIVAL

info@norwichbodyartfestival.co.uk
www.norwichbodyartfestival.co.uk 01603 629920 or 01603 886143

SEPTEMBER 24TH - 26TH

THE INTERNATIONAL LONDON TATTOO CONVENTION

Tobacco Dock, Wapping
www.thelondontattooconvention.com

OCTOBER 30TH - 31ST HALLOWEEN TATTOO BASH

Newton Abbot Racecourse, Devon, TQ12 3AF
www.myspace.com/halloweentattoobash
halloweentattoobash@hotmail.co.uk
Tel: 07768 062253

OCTOBER 30TH - 31ST DUBLIN TATTOO CONVENTION

D4 Hotel, Balsbridge, Dublin
info@dublintattooconvention.com
www.dublintattooconvention.com

OVERSEAS CONVENTIONS 2010

JUNE 4TH - 6TH AMSTERDAM INTERNATIONAL TATTOO CONVENTION

Amsterdam, Holland
www.tattooconvention.nl

JUNE 12TH - 13TH

TATTOO FEST

Chemobudowa Center, Krakow, Poland
www.tattoofest.pl

JULY 30TH - 31ST

6TH INTERNATIONAL STAVANGER TATTOO CONVENTION

Stavanger, Norway

www.tattooconvention.no

AUGUST 6TH - 8TH

3RD STARFIRE TATTOO WEEKEND

International Tattoo Artists Kolpinghaus Poysdorf, Austria
www.starfiretattoo.com
www.myspace.com/starfirattoweeekend

AUGUST 27TH - 29TH

14TH STOCKHOLM INK BASH

International Tattoo Convention at Munchenbryggeriet
www.stockholminkbash.com

SEPTEMBER 4TH - 5TH

5TH ASSEN TATTOO CONVENTION

Nederland, DeSmelt - Stadsbroek 17 Assem
www.tattooconventieassen.com

\ OCTOBER 1ST - 3RD

13TH BARCELONA TATTOO EXPO

www.barcelonatattooexpo.com

OCTOBER 2ND - 3RD

10TH SWITZERLAND INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

St.Gallen Switzerland at Fürstensalzaal, 9200 Gossau
www.tattoo-convention-sg.ch
www.tattoo-time.ch

NOVEMBER 13TH - 14TH

BRUSSELS INTERNATIONAL TATTOO CONVENTION

Tour & Taxis Brussels, Havenlaan 86c, 1000 Brussels, Belgium
www.brussellstattoocovention.be

PERSONAL ADVERTS

Anthony Jones, AKA Craby, doing time at the moment, out next year. Age 26 looking for tattooed males for pen pals

and hopefully more. Write to: Jones AR3162 HMP Parc, Heol Hopcyn John, Bridgend, Wales. CF35 6AP (186)

Male, 28. Open-minded, caring, loyal & honest. Shy to start with, happy go lucky, looking for honest, long-term relationship with woman, aged 25-40, Transgender women welcome. No time wasters, liars or cheats please. Text Adski on: 07908969249 (186)

20 year old student in Bristol, a few medium sized pieces myself. Feel tattoo scene would be nice place to meet like-minded girl, not into rock, but love music, txt. 0774651877 (186)

Male, 39. single into Metal, punk, Goth, horror gigs etc. WLTM Gothic punk female with same tastes and way of life. Wolverhampton, Walsall, Black country area only. TexT me on: 07950145105

Male tattooist, into trance, hardcore & techno, seeks like-minded lady – 30-40 for fun and maybe more. Based in S.London. Txt me on: 07918190690 (186)

Male, 50, professional, N West, great SOH. Seeks females into body art for friendship, visits to conventions, maybe more. Age & looks unimportant, but assertive ladies preferred. Contact Chris 0176888723 (186)

25 Y/O male looking to meet a female. In the Newcastle area. I am inked, pierced and like a lot of art. I am very much into music, body mods and like to go to gigs and conventions. Looking to meet a female into the same things. Contact me on 07891052566 (185)

27 year-old skinhead, currently at HMP. Into punk, heavy metal & motorbikes, looking for peirced, inked female for pen pal. Size doesn't matter. Simon Hambrook, PM8062-AKA Stan. HMP Parc, Heol Hopcyn John, Bridgend, Wales. CF35 6AP (186)

Hello, I am Adam, 28 and I am hoping to get back in touch with a woman who called Brycie. I hope to hear from you soon, that is if you are interested in getting back in touch with me that is. Text me on: 07908969249 (185)

JOBS OFFERED

Hi, my name is Jayne, I am looking for an opportunity to work in a Liverpool/Wirral tattoo studio. Doing odd jobs, cleaning, making tea etc for the experience to be in the tattoo environment. Willing to work for free. Contact: 07746931752 www.myspace.com/jvztattoo (186)

Hi my name is Felicia. I currently reside in Hampshire and I am looking for a tattoo apprenticeship/position preferably whilst also working as body piercer in the same tattoo studio. I have 4 years studio experience as a fully qualified body piercer and have been voluntarily been helping the tattooists by drawing up designs, setting up the stations before each tattoo. I have a portfolio of my piercings and drawings that I have done over the years. I have no drink/drug related problems and I have a good sense of humour but also have the serious side needed in order to give good advice and a professional service. I am very dedicated to this profession and I intend to work very hard in order to become a tattooist. If you are interested please contact me on: feliciablue27@yahoo.co.uk (186)

JOBS OFFERED

Copenhagen's coziest tattoo studio is looking for a new co-worker. Bright Side Tattoo seeking an experienced and skilled tattoo artist to work in a cozy and busy working environment. We are looking for someone who is ambitious and have shop experience. You have tattooed at least four years and you aspire to become better and you are willing to enter into a team that strives on to help and inspire each other in a pleasant working environment. We are a busy shop and you are guaranteed to build clientele fast. Starting from November 2010. There must be expected a trial period before permanent hiring. Has this caught your interest and would you like to apply for the job, please send an email or a letter with a little about yourself and examples of your work. Looking forward to hearing from you. Bright Side Tattoo In writing: Bright Side Tattoo, Overgaden Neden Vandet 15 kld, 1414 Copenhagen K Denmark. Application Email: brightsidetattoo@gmail.com (186)

Professional Tattooist required for popular Middleton Tattoo Studio. We are looking for a clean artist with a good attitude and an extremely strong portfolio to join our expanding team. Please contact us via info@tattoos.co.uk (186/7)

Tattooist required for Vida Loca Tattoo Studio, in the Bolton area. Part-time or permanent position available. Must be able to do custom and flash-work. Must have a strong up to date portfolio and studio experience is preferable. Apprentices need not apply. Call Danny on 07515649654 (186)

Experienced tattoo artist required for the World Famous Fulham Tattoo Centre. Must be clean, English speaking and have a strong portfolio. We are a very customer friendly shop, so no attitude, drink or drugs. Please call Gary on: 07513566541 (186)

Kaya Tattoo Studio, Glasgow, guest spot available in busy, well established studio, experience and portfolio required, contact www.myspace.com/kaya_tattoos or call 0141 339 6171 (186)

Vanity Rose Tattoo studio , Market Drayton , Shropshire are looking for tattoo/piercer for a new studio due to open 3rd may 2010. Must be honest and friendly as it is a family studio so who ever will be taken on will be part of the family. Please e-mail tarahinds@hotmail.co.uk for more details (186)

Friendly studio in Marlow, Bucks, require a full time artist (part time/guest spot considered). Previous studio experience and custom work essential. Please call 01628 478947, or email us through our website www.evetattoo.com. Accommodation may be supplied. (186)

Experienced tattoo artist required for busy South London Studio 10 mins from Waterloo/Victoria by train. Must have good portfolio as we have a high demand for custom work, Immediate start please call 07944 242 611 or email your pictures to info@barrylouaine.com. Visit our web site for studio details www.barrylouaine.com (186)

A full time or part-time position is available in our well-established, busy studio in Cambridge. 5 years experience, and a good portfolio are a minimum requirement. No time-wasters please. Contact Fabio on 01223 354299. tattooingbyfabio.com (186)

Grasshopper are looking for a part time tattoo artist for our studio in Harrow with at least 2 years experience. Contact Tony, Jeff or Amanda on 020 8427 9559 020 8427 9559 (186)

Tattoo Artist required to work in Burnley Studio, applicant must have no drink, drug or drama issues and able to work as a team. Mainly flashwork some custom work, would suit skilled and up and coming artist that has at least 2 years experience working in a professional studio, with an up to date portfolio. Please contact Cynthia or Jay on 01254 278220 or contact with c.v. and images to zodiacnorthwest@btinternet.com (186)

Inkers Tattoo in Chertsey are looking for a 3rd artist with an extensive portfolio to join our expanding, award winning studio. Feel free to drop by our own studio or send CV's to richards611@btinternet.com or please call 07904609575 ask for Jules. (186)

Norwich, Private room in centrally located studio with a great reputation and more work than I can handle! Only on offer to a top quality artist. Must have a stunning portfolio including portraits and other photo-realistic colour work, as well as same in black and Grey would be a bonus. Must enjoy doing plenty of custom work as well as doing flash if required. Must be very patient and friendly. No massive egos, drink/drug, timekeeping or attendance problems. Also no bigotry or hate

speech of any sort is tolerated in this studio. I am not seeking an apprentice, front of shop, piercer or mediocre tattooist. 01603 764354 (186)

Birmingham Ink Tattoo studio are looking for an experienced and professional tattoo artist to join our busy, friendly studio. Must be capable of intricate custom work, flash, and customers own art. You must have excellent communication skills, a brilliant sense of humour and NO EGO! With an Impeccable standard of hygiene. If you think you could be a part of our team please pop in to apply and bring your portfolio and references. BIRMINGHAM INK TATTOO, 66 DALTON STREET, CITY CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM, B4 7LX - birminghamink@hotmail.co.uk 0121 233 2331 (186)

Aurora Tattoo is looking for a new keen member, who preferably specialises in Oriental styled work, to join our team. Please contact (01524) 848689 for more details. (186)

FOR SALE

ESTABLISHED BUSY TATTOO & BODY PIERCING STUDIO FOR SALE. Situated just outside of Coventry city centre in a busy shopping area, fully fitted / equipped modern and pleasant styled and furnished studio. Large Shop/reception area with reception desk, sofa. Large Flash collection, two jewellery display cabinets. Separate large treatment room with two workstations. Separate clean room, Toilet, drawing Area, Photo copier, 42" plasma screen fitted, Large amount of jewellery. Low rent for area. This is a busy popular studio only selling due to leaving the country, Priced for quick sale at £40,000 you can more than make that back in the first year, Possible Owner financing over a two year period, for details please email shaun.weir@hotmail.com or call 07787249343 (186)

Busy est Tattoo Business for sale in the Derbyshire area, due to relocation. Precinct location. Large 2 floor studio to house multiple artists and large waiting room. Further rooms above, suitable for extra studio or piercing room with separate large waiting room. Negotiable lease. Low rent at £375 per calendar month, property qualifies for small business rates relief. Enquiries by email only - lee1138@hotmail.co.uk (186)

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Busy Established Tattoo Business for sale in the Derbyshire area, due to relocation. Precinct location. Large 2 floor studio to house multiple artists and large waiting room. Further rooms above, suitable for extra studio or piercing room with separate large waiting room. Negotiable lease. Low rent at £375 per calendar month, property qualifies for small business rates relief. Enquiries by email only - lee1138@hotmail.co.uk (186)

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